



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

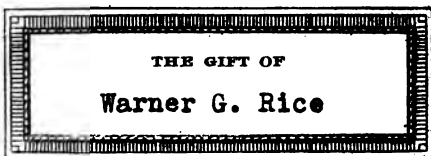
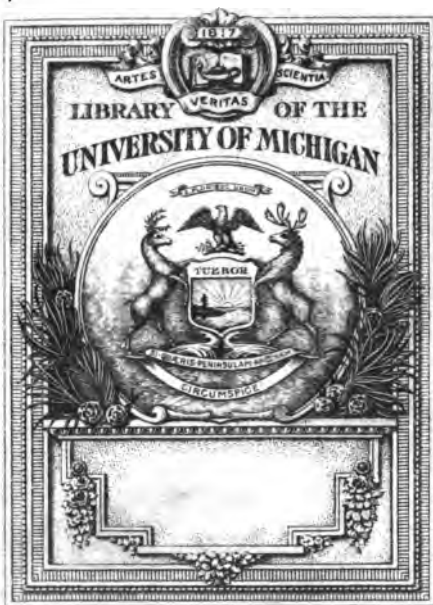
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

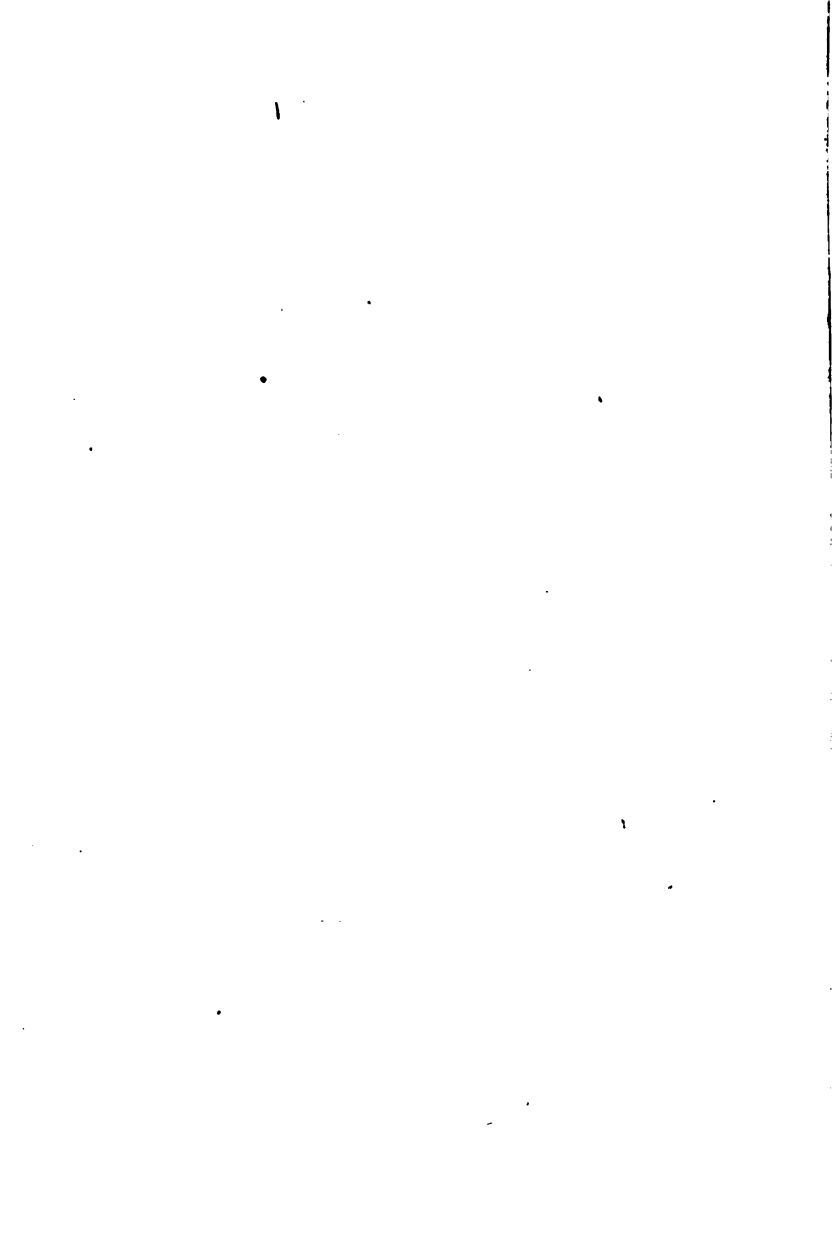
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

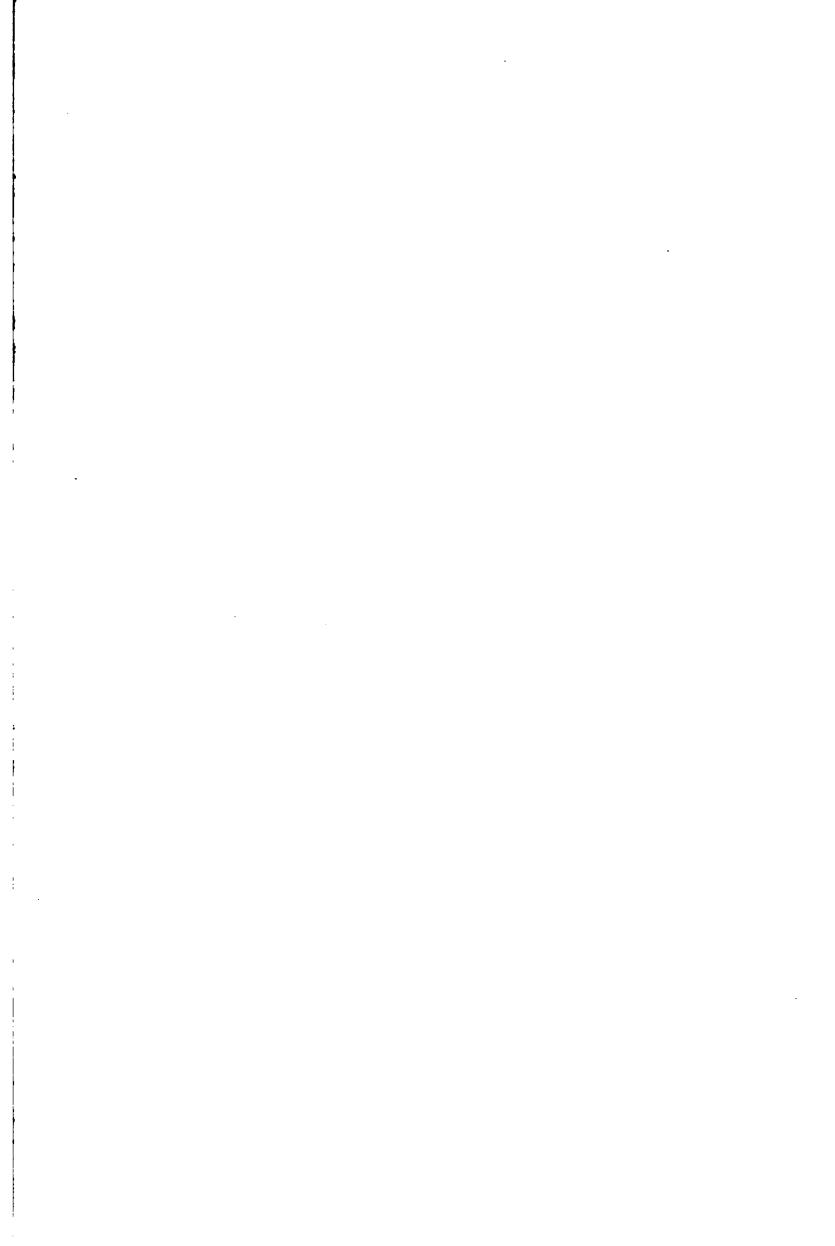
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



HQ
1229
H57
190





To Girls

TO GIRLS

A BUDGET *of* LETTERS

By

Heloise Edwina Hersey



Boston, U.S.A., and London
Ginn & Company, Publishers
The Athenæum Press



Copyright, 1901, by
Small, Maynard & Company
(Incorporated)

Copyright, 1902
by Heloise E. Hersey

Entered at Stationers' Hall

411.10

The Athenæum Press

GINN & COMPANY · PRO-
PRIETORS · BOSTON · U.S.A.



TO THE GIRLS TO WHOM I HAVE TRIED TO SHOW
SOME OF THE BEAUTIES OF OUR LANGUAGE AND
LETTERS, AND WHO IN TURN HAVE SHOWN ME AGAIN
AND AGAIN THE VIGOUR, THE INTELLIGENCE, AND THE
CHARM OF AMERICAN GIRLHOOD, I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

M.
Warren G. Rice
6-12-46
5

Preface

For years I have been considering, in one form and another, the various problems which meet the American girl. I have thought about them much; and I have talked about them, I fear, even more. They have come to me through many channels. The long, confidential talks, in which girls have poured out their perplexities to me, have been among the most interesting experiences of my life. There have been other talks, no less confidential, but not so spontaneous, where stern rebuke had to follow misconduct. Out of these two I have learned lessons, I hope, of comprehension, of patience, and of charity. I can claim no sort of originality for the theories of education, of social life, and of personal conduct, which have gradually formed themselves in my mind, and made their way into my speech to girls. They have come simply as the answer to need, and have been constantly subject to change, or to development. When it happened the other day that a member of a publishing house asked me if I was willing to write a small book for girls, my quick reply was that I could talk it, but I doubted if I could write it. In spite of my doubt, I have been persuaded to make the attempt. What I had to say fell naturally into

PREFACE

the form of letters. That form kept my audience clearly before me in the person of a single girl that needed counsel in some exigency of life, large or small.

Half unconsciously I have found myself addressing two different types of girls. The first, whom I shall address as Helen, is the girl who, for one reason and another, has decided not to go to college, but who is finding, or has found, an education in the better sort of boarding-school. I have known this kind of girl most intimately for fifteen years. I think her problems are grave ones, and I have found her meeting them with a seriousness and a high purpose for which she often fails to get credit. The other letters are addressed to Margaret, the college girl. Of course, her position is not strictly a unique one; and many questions which meet her meet other girls as well.

The subjects treated in the letters fall into three divisions: the first of these is the educational one, the second the social, and the third concerns personal character. These will constantly overlap each other; but in the table of contents they have been separated, as far as it was possible to do so.

I wish to say frankly that the little book has not taken into account any grown-up folk that

P R E F A C E

may chance to read it. I shall not be dismayed if they shall find it shallow or childish or trite. The point of view from which we look at life and its problems shifts steadily between the ages of eighteen and forty. Much that seems serious and important in girlhood becomes trivial in middle life; but it is also true that many of the grave affairs of middle life seem absurdly trivial in youth. It has been my good fortune to live with girls uninterruptedly ever since I was a girl myself, and so gradually to gain one point of view without, I believe, losing the other. This fact gives me hope that the little book may fulfil my one ambition for it, and may give to some girl a ray of light in perplexity or a thrill of courage in weariness.

H. E. H.

Contents

I. ABOUT EDUCATION

	PAGE
THE EDUCATED WOMAN	1
COLLEGE OR NOT?	19
THE CHOICE OF STUDIES	28
THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE	35
COURSES OF READING	43
THE READING OF FICTION	54
THE ART OF SPEECH	64
TO-DAY'S PROBLEM FOR THE COLLEGE WOMAN	74

II. ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

WHAT IS YOUR CULTURE TO ME?	81
THE EDUCATED GIRL IN SOCIETY	89
THE MANNERS OF THE MODERN GIRL	98
THE DIFFICULTIES OF MODERN GIRLS	106
THE DEMANDS OF VACATION	115
THE AMUSEMENTS OF GIRLS	122
CRITICISM OF THE THEATRE	137
CIVIC OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN	146
THE SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN	162
FRIENDSHIPS FOR WOMEN	171

III. ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?	178
EGOTISM	186
THE VIRTUE OF RETICENCE	194

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE PLEASURE OF STRUGGLE	200
"I AM SORRY"	205
TELLING LIES	210
THE DUTY OF HEALTH	214
THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY	223
THE PLACE OF LUXURY IN LIFE	235
A BACCALAUREATE SERMON	240

To Girls

A Budget of Letters

I. About Education

THE EDUCATED WOMAN

MY DEAR HELEN: The difference between an educated and an uneducated woman? Yes, I think I know it, though I don't wonder that you are puzzled in comparing the qualities which you see in your Aunt Lizzie and those of Miss Johnson, freshly arrived from abroad, in all the glory of a European Ph.D.

Your aunt was educated, as the phrase goes, in an old-fashioned, fashionable boarding-school, where she was taught little except Americanised French, English history, needlework, and dancing; and yet you think her a more useful and delightful member of society than Miss Johnson, who reads seven languages, and took high honours with a thesis on quaternions.

Now, when I was a Sophomore in college, I had perfectly clear ideas as to what constituted feminine education. (We used to call it "The Higher Education" in those days, and took it for granted that that phrase referred to women, and not to men.) There was no doubt in my mind then that this education rested solidly upon a college de-

ABOUT EDUCATION

gree. Modern science was its prime essential. History and French and music and *belles-lettres* had been well enough for our grandmothers, but scarcely counted toward the end which we modern women wished to gain. Now I have revised that judgment. To explain my present point of view, I must go back a little, to the real aim of education.

Education, like religion, we may say reverently, is to be known by its fruits. The ability to pass examinations and to take high honours, to wrest a degree from a reluctant university, to carry through a difficult piece of original research,—none of these is the test. They are promise, not fulfilment; blossom, not fruit; the road, not home. In other words, education is not an end in itself, but the means to an end. So much that is delightful in the way of friendship and social life and pleasant class-room rivalries is associated with the years in college dormitories that there is danger of our forgetting the actual significance of these things. It is really slight.

Suppose I take you into my confidence, and tell you the actual test which I apply relentlessly to find out if a woman is well edu-

The EDUCATED WOMAN

cated. It is this: Is she skilled in the art of living? Such a test, you see, would make difficult work for a board of examiners; but, after all, it is not so troublesome to apply as you might suppose.

You know well enough the distinction between amateur acting and that of the professional. We take pleasure in two amateur performances in the course of a winter, but a constant succession of them would be pretty painful. In point of fact, the third-rate professional gives more pleasure in the long run than the first-rate amateur. This is because he knows how to use all his powers, and he makes the most of them. He may even turn his weaknesses to his advantage. (Witness Sir Henry Irving's impersonation of Louis XI.) The professional's performance is all of a piece; and, although it may never reach any very high level, it has a certain consistency and completeness which make upon us the impression of reality.

Now education should turn the amateur in the art of living into the professional. My educated woman has all her powers at her command. They are not scattered by an emergency. Her temper is no more likely to play her false than her reasoning

ABOUT EDUCATION

power, and her heart and her hand are equally steady and equally generous.

For example, my friend Mrs. Smithson lost all her servants in a cold snap last winter because the water-pipes froze and her temper got the better of her. Whether the accident was her fault or that of the cook does not matter for the argument. The catastrophe demonstrated that in so far, she was not an educated woman, although I believe she has written an admirable essay on Browning's *Sordello*. The Harvard students who "plunged" in the stock market a few weeks ago, and lost a year's allowance and more, were not educated, and probably hardly on the road to education. Mary Knowles went to bed last winter and stayed there for a fortnight on being told by her father that she must give up her pony and dog-cart in the family retrenchment of expenses. She is attending one of the most expensive schools in Boston, but so far she has not taken the first step toward being educated.

On the other hand, Stevenson, who never got a degree from the University of Edinburgh, made his frail body do the bidding of his iron will all his life. Shakespeare

The EDUCATED WOMAN

knew small Latin and less Greek, but his eye was trained to see and his heart to feel and his hand to paint. The schooling which Abraham Lincoln had was hardly one year, but no statesman of our century has had a firmer grasp of large issues.

One need not go to the history of great men to see this illustrated. The girl who meets a family crisis bravely and effectively, or who can take a moribund branch of the Girls' Friendly Society and restore it by her skill to life and vigour, or who can set a poor family on its feet by advice and help at the right moment, or who can be nurse, housemaid, secretary, friend, daughter, by turns, and each with a good heart, this girl has already gathered the fruit of education, whatever may have been her technical training.

How to come by these powers is the next question, and a very important one. Some people seem to be born with them, but I fancy none ever is. Some men seem to be born athletic, but I have never found one who had not some history of training to tell. Now the process of education which on the whole has seemed to be most successful in getting desirable results is a twofold one.

ABOUT EDUCATION

The first half of it has an ugly name, and it is not a favourite in girls' boarding-schools. It is Discipline. Discipline consists in doing some one thing over and over and over again, and, when that is done, beginning the very same thing anew. It makes less difference than we suppose whether the task on which this labour is expended is Greek, algebra, history, or French. People talk about the "disciplinary studies," meaning thereby mathematics and the classics; but in my scheme of education there is no study which is not disciplinary. If there is such a one, it surely does not belong in the curriculum of anybody under twenty-five years of age.

This doing the thing over and over again results finally, of course, in being able to do it with extreme rapidity, accuracy, and perfection. In many cases these go so far that the act becomes really automatic. There is no better illustration of this than your experience, for instance, in learning to play the piano. The five-finger exercise, which at first took all your attention, presently required no attention; and after a year or two the finger and the brain began to act together, and the work which had been so difficult and thankless became a delight.

The EDUCATED WOMAN

There are good reasons why one should try to get this discipline out of the subjects which have been used for the purpose for centuries. Latin, for example, is better for the desired end than Chinese, because wise men have given their minds to the Latin tongue, and have developed all its capacities for discipline. I heard a clever business man say that his world was divided into two classes of men, those who had studied Latin and those who had not; and there was, and would always be, a definite difference in their points of view. I had never put it quite so sharply, but I think that is substantially true. There must always be a wide difference between a man that has seen a great city and one that has never seen one, between the man that has been to Europe and one that has not been. The outlook gets broadened, changed. A man need not necessarily be better, but he is different. So with the student of Latin. His attitude toward the use of words is altered by even a slight knowledge of Latin, and the English dictionary becomes a better friend.

If it is true that doing the thing over, doing it well, doing it patiently, and doing it persistently, is the main thing in the require-

ABOUT EDUCATION

ment of training, you will see that where it is done, or under whose direction, is of little consequence. Now we are approaching one of the reasons, at least, why your Aunt Lizzie seems to you to be better educated than our friend, the Ph.D. Even from the delicate needlework which she learned to do at her fashionable boarding-school she gained the power of attention, of patience, and of taste. Nobody can tell whether practice in Greek paradigms or in the use of logarithms would have been better. Suffice it to say that the end of education was attained. Of course, embroidery should not take to-day the place of history. None the less, we are bound to give it due credit for its good results in the past.

Our educated woman must have a sense of proportion, and it is never too early to acquire that. Her study of geography, her reading of French, her knowledge of history, her investigations in biology, all should tend to show her the world as it is. Siberia should not be too far for her sympathy to reach. China's customs should not seem to her so odd as to turn her world upside down. England should not be merely a set of shrines sacred to literary associations, but a living

The EDUCATED WOMAN

island where history is a-making in this very year of our Lord. Even to the girl country born and bred the problems of the great municipal life of New York should be important and interesting; and, in short, the material for education might well be so chosen that, when it has been assimilated, our young woman can declare, without exaggeration, that nothing human is alien to her.

One more word about this disciplinary process. I believe it can be made perpetually interesting. Now I don't mean easy. I have no patience with easy education. The kindergarten method has no place in education after the child can read. I have gone into a school-room where the children sat in easy-chairs, and listened to the teacher's explanation of easy subjects, illustrated by the stereopticon, when I despaired of education. At the end of the day the teacher was exhausted, and the children had the pleasantly bored expression which is the most discouraging that one can see on a child's face. I recall a school which was well ventilated by loose and rattling windows, and half heated by a stove that smoked. In it there was the buzz of recitations all day long, in every subject from the

ABOUT EDUCATION

primer to Cicero's Orations. There was not a single modern appliance; and yet a student, working with an antiquated lexicon and a text without a note or illustration, somehow managed to get a picture of Rome, the Forum, the Senate, and the struggling factions more vivid than any stereopticon ever gave. She was never bored with hard work; and, if her fingers sometimes ached with the cold and her eyes smarted with the smoke, she found a cure for these ills, without knowing why, in the intellectual activity which is really the highest joy of life. It would be a curious commentary on our modern enthusiasm for education if it should prove to be a cheapener of the noblest life of mind and spirit; and if we should discover, by and by, as its fruit, not skill in the art of living, but the peevish discontent with that eternal condition of wholesome life imposed in the garden of Eden: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

I said that discipline was half of education. If it were all, a convent or a monastery would be the best place to put the young life for its training: routine is there reduced to its perfection. But the girl whose education has had in it nothing richer than subjection

The EDUCATED WOMAN

to routine will show little skill when she comes to actual life with its complicated problems and its sudden emergencies.

It is easy to define the methods of discipline. It is difficult even so much as to describe this other half of the process. Edward Thring has, perhaps, put the matter better than any one else,—“the transmission of life from the living, through the living, to the living.” This is the second and the crowning element in education: it is a hard saying; it makes way but slowly. Many a college professor ignores or decries it. In many a lecture-room a phonograph delivering the same lectures would be as useful to the student as is the teacher. Those who hold that teaching is but an inferior species of lecturing are many, and they abound especially in what we call “the higher institutions of learning.” They would have us believe that a personal relation between teacher and student is subversive of all sound educational results. Let us once for all get this matter cleared up. Lecturing is dealing with books, facts, subjects. The more excellent the arrangement, the more lucid the exposition, the better satisfied may the lecturer be. He may fairly judge of his success

ABOUT EDUCATION

by his own state of mind at the end of his lecture: any one else may judge of it by reading the syllabus of the lecture carefully. Teaching, on the other hand, is dealing with the minds and hearts of the students; and the only test of success in this art is the condition in which those hearts and minds are found at the end of an hour or a year. If the note-book has gained pages of notes, but the brain has felt no thrill of inspiration, the hour is a failure; if the memory has been tested, but the heart has not been quickened, the teacher may well be discontent; if the student has caught glimpses of the teacher's pet hobby, but the teacher has not been able to discern and reach the causes of the student's difficulties, there may have been much talk, but there has been little vitalising work.

Of course here, as in every great principle of life, there are possibilities of absurdity and exaggeration. The personal note is as sensitive to forcing as any other note in the gamut of experience. Personal relations of every sort have in themselves a tendency to degenerate if they are not consciously held up to a high standard. There is no place more trying to the weakness of human nature than

The EDUCATED WOMAN

the slight elevation on which the attractive teacher finds herself when she enters upon her work. The raised platform invites to the pleasing indulgence of striking an attitude and receiving worshippers. We all of us know the gushing teacher who loves her "dear girls," and who has tears for their little faults, blind eyes for their large ones, and no real influence in moulding their characters. In no soft paths shall my teacher and pupil walk hand in hand. The Hill Difficulty is to be climbed alone. The voice of inspiration, of encouragement, of admonition, will generally come from the cloud-capped summit. So coming, woe be to it if it have not the accent of sincerity,—a large sincerity! The least suspicion of a pose, a hint of flippancy, the shadow of a mock knowledge on the part of the teacher, will destroy the efficacy of any offered aid. So we come at last to this serious and sobering conclusion. A genuine personal relation between teacher and student is the vital spark of education. The nature of that relation must of necessity be determined by the elder and stronger. Life, life, life, it must have and must give. Truth-telling must be its very substance. Loyalty must repay truth,

ABOUT EDUCATION

even when the truth is bitter. That a teacher should give a death stab to vanity or deceit in the student, that the student should bear the pain with a smiling face, and reach out a grateful and affectionate hand of friendship in return,—this is an experience that should make each party to it glad and proud.

Thus far I have spoken of this vitalising process as if it must always come from the mind of the teacher; but there are many other sources from which it is drawn. Great books are life-givers. When Tennyson was fourteen years old, he heard of Byron's death; though he had never seen the poet, he said "I thought the whole world was at an end. I thought everything was over and finished for every one,—that nothing else mattered. I remember I walked out alone, and carved 'Byron is dead!' into the sandstone." Ten years later he wrote of Byron and Shelley, "However mistaken they may be, they yet did give the world another heart and new pulses; and so we are kept going." Millions of human souls owe to the poets, the philosophers, the stirring writers of the lives of great men, "another heart and new pulses." Such inspiration has come in the very highest degree from the

The EDUCATED WOMAN

Bible. From whatever source the stimulus comes, it is traceable at last to the contact of the human spirit with some other and greater human spirit. It is the transmission of life from the living (who live though they are dead) to the living. So I think we may trace in every well-regulated character the two processes of education,—its discipline and its personal inspiration. This last may have come from one teacher, from many teachers, from one's parents, from a friend, or from great books. Somewhere in the life of the well-educated man or woman we shall find that this glorious spiritual flame has touched it and set its torch alight.

You will be asking me now for some practical test which may be applied, that we may find out whether or not this twofold work is going on. Is there any way in which I may tell if one of my girls is being educated? I think I know one test. Let the poet help me to it with a parable. Once upon a time a fair lady dwelt at Camelot. She wrought a wondrous web, and she dreamt of shadows as she saw them in a mirror. One day she broke away from work and mirror and dream; and, seeking the world in which lived the knight of her

ABOUT EDUCATION

ill-fated love, she died at his feet, her hungry heart fed only by one glance of pity from his eye. So runs the world-old tale of the Lady of Shalott. Yet, once again, there lived a lady deep in a wood. She, too, wove a magic garment. Till it was finished, she could never forth into the world. One day the last thread was set in its golden fringe. Bearing it proudly on her arm, she made her way out of the forest. All unknown to her a noble prince came riding toward the very path by which she was emerging. He was close upon her. In another instant they would have been face to face, but a wretched beggar sprang from the roadside with hands stretched out for alms. In an instant she had thrown over him the magic robe, and it had wrought its charm. Henceforth she was doomed to see in him, and in him alone, all manly beauties, virtues, powers, and to follow him throughout the world. Now here are two exquisite parables of the life, the fate, the nature, of a woman. She dies for love of the unattainable. She is blind, and loves the base with a devotion and loyalty worthy of a nobler object. From these mediæval failures the education of our time is pledged to deliver us. Our modern

The EDUCATED WOMAN

girl may no longer die for love of that which is out of reach. She may not to-day even live cherishing a love for that which is beneath her. She must live and choose and love, and she must choose to love the highest. Tell me what a woman loves, and I will tell you whether she has learned the fine art of living. First, she must love noble books, because they are the life-blood of the most vital of human souls. Then she must love beauty wherever it is found,—in nature, in character, in good causes, in art. She shall love beauty enough to work for it with heart and mind, she shall protect it, she shall be able to create it, she shall imbue other souls with her own zeal for it. Then she shall love humanity even when it is unlovely, because, when the worst is said of man, it remains true that he was made in the image of God, and for the saving of him it was worth while that the Son of God should die. Finally, she shall love her country. She shall love it in peace and in war, in times of good report and in times of evil report. If she once loves her own country, I do not fear that she shall lack what is to-day called “the higher patriotism.” I do fear that that may sometimes

ABOUT EDUCATION

be found to be no patriotism at all. Books, beauty, humanity, her country,—these are noble loves. Woe to her who substitutes for them self, pleasure, “our social circle.” The new Elaine is bred neither in cloister nor in forest, but on the edge at least of the full, rich life of the city. She comes forth with no magic web, but with the clearest of eyes, the most apprehensive of minds, the steadiest of wills. She is sure-footed and strong-hearted. She is no sentimentalist, she is no agnostic, she is no indifferentist. She is intellectual, and she is lovable. She knows how to listen and how to speak. She is brave, and she is true. The women of my generation dreamed of a world made new by reason of our new liberties. Our dream has but partly come to pass. The girls of the future must make the miracle for which we hoped the common-place of every day.

“They to the disappointed earth shall give
The lives we meant to live,—
Beautiful, free, and strong ;
The light we almost had
Shall make them glad ;
The words we waited long
Shall run in music from their voice and song ;

COLLEGE OR NOT

Unto our world hope's daily oracles
From their lips shall be brought ;
And in our lives love's hourly miracles
By them be wrought."

COLLEGE OR NOT?

MY DEAR MARGARET: "College or not?" is indeed a very serious question. Like many of the most serious questions in life, it has to be decided before the judgment is fairly formed. As in the case of marriage, half the world makes up its mind before it has any mind to make up. However, there is no shirking the problem. Having once used your best judgment, with all the facts in your possession for determining such a matter, I can but advise you never to regret that judgment. Mistakes of judgment are painful enough to their victims, but they should not be imbittered by useless regrets. Use the same force which would be wasted in regret, and you will find a contrivance to set the blunder right. Now for such light as I have to offer you on the question of a college course.

Where the question of earning a living is to be taken into account as a serious factor

ABOUT EDUCATION

in a girl's life, she should, if possible, go to college. There is no doubt that it is now becoming an obstacle to women who must enter the wage-earning world not to have what is called "a liberal education." The profession of teaching is slowly being closed to all those who have not the requisite college degree. One after another, other professions will probably follow suit. If you want to put a woman into a place of large responsibility and profit, she must prepare for it by going to college. But though every girl may be called upon to earn her own living, I see no reason why any girl should ignore the facts of her life when they lead her to expect to be able to live in the future, as she has lived in the past, on the accumulation of property which others have made for her. You must not permit yourself to fall into the mistake of supposing that it is self-respecting and desirable that every woman should be a wage-earner. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The world wants the work of all those women who can afford to give it for nothing; that is, without the serious necessity of adapting work to wages. When a woman must work for wages, she should do so with philosophy and with a good courage.

COLLEGE OR NOT

When she need not work for wages, she should take up her work with gratitude and with all the higher hope.

Once more, the question of health is a very important one for the girl who is mapping out the line of her education. I doubt if it is wise for any young woman whose physician calls her delicate to undertake the four years of college life. It is undoubtedly true that such girls do often come out of college stronger than when they went in; but it is also true that they often drop out of their classes and go home to a life of semi-invalidism, and that their failure is always attributed to intellectual work. It is not fair, I think, that women's colleges should have to be responsible for these chances. There are other ways of study and other forms of mental training for the frail girl, which will be adapted to her needs and may, I believe, always attain for her the desired end.

One more question may well be settled in advance. I would not send a girl to college who does not want to go. I am not sure whether this would not apply equally to boys. But certainly for our sex a strong bent toward the life of the home and of

ABOUT EDUCATION

society is a great bar to success as a college student. I have seldom seen any student who was forced into college who was not irritable, discontented, and pessimistic at the end of her college course.

College life is a means, not an end: it should not be cited as if it were a final goal. The gains of college life are easily enumerated. The first and most evident is the trained mind. It is becoming more and more widely acknowledged that efficiency is far more important for men and women than accumulations of knowledge. What the graduate can do is far more the question than what she knows. To this end one course after another in the college curriculum is being adapted. It has always been the fashion for the Senior to say half-boastfully, half-regretfully, that she could not pass her Freshman examinations in her Senior year. That is as it should be. When a woman has spent five years out of college, she will be equally incapable of recalling the work of her Senior year.

The second achievement of college life is, no doubt, an acquirement of knowledge. But that equipment is by no means so complete or so varied as we believe when we

COLLEGE OR NOT

enter upon the college course. Perhaps its most important element is the general knowledge of the sweep and trend of the world's history which the classics and the literatures of our own language and of other languages may give us; the causes for which men have been willing to live and die; the social habits which they have developed; the achievements in science and government which they have made. These we are bound to learn, and to carry the knowledge of them into the world. The formulæ of mathematics, the symbols of chemistry, the dates of battles and reigns, and the nomenclature of the logician are doomed to be dropped out of memory into the waste basket.

The third advantage of the college course is the executive experience gained in the miniature life of the college. One of the great disadvantages of a woman's career is that she must always be doing tasks of which she has had no previous experience. Now the college is human life in little. We may acquire knowledge of people there. We may practise until we gain efficiency in the art of getting things done. We shall meet, and we may conquer, social difficulties. The triumphs of the society room are quite

ABOUT EDUCATION

as important as those of the class-room. It takes some judgment to equalise the demand made by lessons and that made by the other forces of college life, but this very exercise of judgment is good for us.

Closely allied to executive power lies the great privilege of friendship, the most highly prized, perhaps, of all the gifts a college has to offer. There are many reasons that the friendships formed in college often prove more substantial than those formed in ordinary social life. First of these is, no doubt, the fact that the range of selection is so much larger, and that, consequently, the reasons for any given affinity are likely to be better ones. Then the life under similar conditions and with similar tasks makes the ground of common interest broad and rich. College women may well laugh to scorn the old theory that the friendships of women are flimsy and insincere. I have never known stronger friendships among men than I have known among girls, and I believe no influence is more salutary in making reasonable, affectionate, and self-controlled wives and mothers.

Finally, the college brings us a noble gift when it imbues us with *esprit de corps*: much

COLLEGE OR NOT

as I dislike the use of the French phrase, I believe that our English language has no equivalent for it. The loyalty of large numbers of *alumnæ* to their Alma Mater is one of the purest of emotions. In it there is no thought of personal advancement; it is as free from selfishness as any human feeling can be: and yet it is strong for effort, and vigorous both destructively and constructively. To the loyal alumna, the college becomes a Person, and the beautiful figure dominates the imagination and commands: devotion as complete as it is subtle.

You will be ready to propound to me the next question, and I may as well meet it on the way. You are about to ask me, "Which college?" and I must answer the question in such a way that I shall throw the real decision where it belongs; namely, into your hands. Here are my suggestions. In the first place, let the selection be a personal one. So far as you can, try to see the different colleges which present themselves for your approval. The impression which each makes upon you is not to be disregarded. Many of the great services which a college is to do for you must be done through the imagination. Attractiveness

ABOUT EDUCATION

and beauty make their appeal; and this appeal is not a foolish one, but one founded upon the substantial facts in character. At present I should advise strongly in favour of a college which has the dormitory system. Believing so warmly as I do in the social gains to be made in the college life, I think the living together more important even for women than for men. Personally, as you know, I do not like coeducation, partly because it largely interferes with the cultivation of the friendships which I have just been extolling. I am far from wishing to shut girls up to a cloistered life for four years; but I do not believe that, so far at least, the coeducational college has secured a method of life as gracious and effective as that which has been secured by the so-called separate college.

Whether or not, however, you select a coeducational institution, you certainly should choose one where the idea of womanliness dominates the education of women. Neither athletic supremacy nor high scholarship should be allowed to stand in the way of the development of true womanliness. It is fair to ask in regard to any college, "What are the views of its president and faculty on just

COLLEGE OR NOT

this question?" After all, the college is what its teaching force makes it. They should be such men and women as you would like to imitate. They should be far removed from pedantry and dryness on the one hand and from emotionalism and softness on the other. I know of no position which it is harder for one to keep without the warping and twisting of character than the position of professor in a woman's college. It is one of the great problems of modern education to find men and women who can live in this atmosphere of youthful admiration and youthful criticism, and can find ways to keep themselves sound, strong, free, and gracious. Whatever college secures the largest number of such teachers is bound to make the deepest mark upon the next generation.

You see now that the answer to your questions, "College or not?" and "Which college?" must be the vague and irritating one, "That depends"; and no law can be laid down which shall hold for all girls alike. I would not, if I could, send you and your five sisters to any one college until I had studied with care the varying problems of health, inclination, character, and intellectual

ABOUT EDUCATION

ability of each of you, and then had compared my results with what I could learn of each of the leading half-dozen colleges for women. However, do not be dismayed at the magnitude of your decision. In my years of experience and my acquaintance with thousands of college women, I have known but one who expressed herself as dissatisfied with the four years at the college. That one was born to be a cynical pessimist, and not even the experience of a liberal education counteracted the native tendency. I expect no such result for you. Whatever decision you reach, you are fairly sure to secure for yourself in the years of your education the happiest years of your life. You will always delight to recall them. They will bring to you in the future even more than they promise in the present.

THE CHOICE OF STUDIES

MY DEAR MARGARET : I am glad to give you my views on the question of your choice of electives, though I must warn you that I fear you will not be much wiser at the end than at the beginning. When it comes to select-

THE CHOICE OF STUDIES

ing from so large and rich a list as you send me, I find myself a good deal in the position of the excellent farmer who, on being asked at an hotel, "Custard pie or mince?" replied, "Yes." However, I may present to you a few hints, at least, which you may work over at your leisure. Let us dismiss at once the fallacy that you need to take into consideration whether any given elective will conduce to "a practical education." "A practical education!" What sins have been committed in that name! The whole object of an academic education is misconceived when it is believed that it is primarily intended to fit one for any given line of work. Do not forget Mr. Sill's admirable phrase, in summing up the office of a college,—“to evolve, not to equip.” It is intellectual training you chiefly want in your college course, and that must not be confused with intellectual acquirement. It is better to know how to do any given task which may present itself than to be skilled in doing particularly well any one task. I presume that I should have difficulty in answering five questions in any one of the courses that I pursued at college, outside of the one which I have since taught; but that

ABOUT EDUCATION

does not detract in the least from the value which my college course is to me. Now the question in regard to the electives, you will see, is a discussion of what each one of them has to give you in the way of training,—evolution.

Mathematics offers especial advantages for improving the accuracy of the mental process, and of verbal statement. Nine-tenths of the girls that pursue, for example, trigonometry or calculus or mathematical astronomy will never have any use for these branches of learning in later life. That makes no difference. They have done their work for the growing mind, and it is a valuable work. As long as you feel yourself lacking in accuracy of mental process, keep on with your study of mathematics. No other branch achieves this result so rapidly and so thoroughly, though many others do it in some measure.

The study of Latin holds a unique place in the world of education. That place is not easily defined. It has a noble literature, though not one so noble as the Greek. The structure of its sentences is compact and excellent, but this may be said also of several of the modern languages; but I am inclined to

THE CHOICE OF STUDIES

believe that there is no study which makes so much change in what one may call "the general point of view" of a man as the study of Latin. Men who have studied Latin may always be distinguished, by any careful eye, from those who have not studied it. It is hardly going too far to say that it is the shibboleth of liberal education. One does not talk much about what one learns in the study of Latin. Most of us do not read Latin after we leave college. The mark which it has left upon us is not exactly obvious; and yet it is a definite mark, and one which I think must always remain as pointing out one of the most desirable and broadening elements in the larger thought. To gain this general advantage, it is not necessary to pursue Latin to the end of one's college course. The Odes of Horace and some of the Latin plays should surely be included in one's curriculum. Beyond that, I think the individual taste may safely be consulted.

Modern languages have their especial value. They are more attractive in the average college for women now than they were in my day. Of course, they offer constant practice in the expression of thought, and they open up new literatures. Twenty-

ABOUT EDUCATION

five years ago French was essential, and German desirable, for a liberal education. To-day Italian and Spanish are rapidly being added to the list, and Russian may not be long behind them. I have only one caution in regard to your study of the modern languages. While you are in college, do not apply too much time to the effort to learn to speak them. Grind away at your grammar, and acquire the ability to write a correct note, and for the rest read as broadly in the literature of each language as you may. The time spent in acquiring the difficult art of conversation in a foreign tongue may be divided by ten when one is once in the country where that tongue is spoken, and is forced to use it or starve. Nothing is so great a help toward rapid learning of the speech of the people as a substantial knowledge of the grammar of that speech. Once having that, you must trust to your European travel for the acquirement of facility.

As with the modern languages, no plea is necessary for history or literature. Every girl needs as much as she can get of each, and the only question is of not allowing them to overtop other studies of equal importance.

The CHOICE OF STUDIES

It is impossible for you to master all the sciences, even if you have a bent in that direction. If you have not, one or two should be pursued far enough so that you may understand and appreciate the scientific method. Biology has a great fascination for modern women, and I think rightly so. But chemistry, botany, physics, all go to help train the power of observation. For a woman it is hard to overvalue that power. Most of us see broadly rather than sharply. Science teaches us to do both: you must not leave it out of your scheme of education. There are two sciences in which every woman of this time should try to be well read. These are psychology and sociology. Before each of these sciences a great future is opening. To know myself, and to know my neighbour, seems the most important task of the present. Psychology, which used to be far up in the clouds, is now becoming a matter of the most practical moment; and sociology, once merely a matter of theories and vague speculations, has its feet firmly on the ground. At Harvard one course in sociology is familiarly known by the students as "drunkenness, drainage, and divorce."

One more word. Pursue any study in

ABOUT EDUCATION

any line for the sake of falling under the sway of a great and notable teacher. If your college has such a one, it is of no consequence whether his work lies in the direction of your particular taste. You must not lose the touch of his personality upon yours. After all, personality is the great gift which a teacher has for a receptive student. Enthusiasm and scholarship are never so attractive as when embodied in a Person. One of the great advantages of the elective system is that it enables more and more students to come under the sway of the few great magicians which any college may hope to have.

Finally, whatever courses you elect, I wish you to remember that every one of them must be brought to help you in the use of your mother tongue. No art is so important to you as the art of speech. It must be taught you chiefly by yourself. It cannot be acquired save by study and persistent effort. Once gained, like wisdom, it is "far above rubies." It must be sought in season and out of season. An examination paper in chemistry should have its sentences constructed as correctly as those of a commencement part. Even the free use of the note-book in the lecture-room should not relax your care that

ENGLISH LITERATURE

your syntax is accurate. The embarrassment of a recitation before a large class should not confuse your use of "shall" and "will." "It is evident," says Mr. Arlo Bates in his excellent *Talks on Writing English*, "that to learn the art of composition is no small undertaking; but it is to be kept in mind that this art, being the means of human expression, underlies all study and all thought no less than it underlies all communication. It aids one to understand what one reads, what one studies, what one thinks, no less than it aids one to compose a poem, to produce a novel, to write a letter, or to relate the latest bit of piquant gossip. Do not make the mistake of supposing that it is outside of your other intellectual pursuits, save in the sense that all the rest of your education is enclosed in it."

THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

MY DEAR HELEN: You seem a little worried that you are to leave your father's generous library, where you have read at your own sweet will since you could read at all, to pursue the study of English literature in a

ABOUT EDUCATION

regular class-room, with written examinations looming up to prevent your taking your daily pleasure in Shakespeare and Thackeray and Emerson. Let me see if I can do a little to prove to you that you should find the faces of your old friends more attractive, and not less so, under these new conditions. The study of English literature has fallen into disrepute among a good many right-minded folk. I think this is for several reasons. Two of them are perhaps worth our notice. The teaching of literature has often been given over to fact-mongers,—the most delusive of educators. They have told us a great deal about the facts of the writers' lives, and the dates and order of publication of their works, and very little about the works themselves. Or literature has been presented in critical lectures or essays, which leave the student's mind in the condition of that of the famous young lady who had not seen Niagara, but had heard it very highly spoken of. Now literature, properly studied, makes its first appeal directly to the perception, just as truly as does botany or geology. The great books are the data to be viewed through the conditions of life preceding them. The study of them differs from the study of a bit

ENGLISH LITERATURE

of rock or a quartz crystal only as the study of a butterfly differs from that of the flower which feeds it. It is a higher form of life, and all the better fitted for the scientific method. Here the materials for the study are not dumb chemicals or fossilised animals, but the most vital truths told by the deepest thinkers. The first step toward the proper teaching of literature is to put into the hand of the student the specimen to be studied: the second is to subordinate to the specimen itself all talk about it. It is of no importance when one reads *Prometheus Unbound* that one should know anything about Shelley's habit of being late at dinner or his original interpretation of the obligations brought by marriage; but it is of importance that we should understand his passionate sympathy with the French Revolution, his revolt against the iron-bound system of education which had turned him out of the university, and his profoundly religious view of the universe, which the English Philistine knew no better than to call atheism.

Observation, however careful and painstaking, is the beginning only of that education which prepares us for complete living. The memory is all that gives dignity to observa-

ABOUT EDUCATION

tion. The cat which purrs about a strange piece of furniture or investigates from a distance with her sharp glance a new-comer observes better than you or I, but she does not remember or judge save in exceptional cases.

Royal roads to a good memory are legion nowadays, if we may believe the words of their discoverers. I shall continue to think, however, that the best way to learn to remember is to memorise; and that the best material for memorising is the greatest words of the greatest masters. *The Commemoration Ode* is more stimulating to good citizenship than the names and dates of all the Revolutionary battles. Hamlet's soliloquies seem to me more practical material for strengthening the will than all the chronologies ever compiled. I would even go so far as to hope that the holding great lines in the memory may have a certain regenerative effect upon character. I should like every young man to know by heart Hamlet's characterisation:—

. . . "Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core,—ay, in my heart of heart."

The effects of a busy life might well be

ENGLISH LITERATURE

counteracted by Wordsworth's reflection : —

“The world is too much with us,”

or by the matchless lines setting forth for all time the riches of the imaginative life : —

“To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

Perception and a strong and accurate memory are not all we require of a girl. For “complete living” we must have, in just measure, the power of comparing and judging. These powers are easy enough to exercise in simple matters. A child can tell the difference between a kitten and a puppy, but it is not on such simple questions that the conduct of life turns, or that practice must be gained for the tasks of choosing our bonnets or our friends. But among the pages of the great writers there is scope for the practice of the keenest discrimination. One must choose, judge, compare, when the question of the real value of a poem or a play is at issue. One must even learn to suspend judgment,—a task still more difficult than to form judgment. Practice makes perfect. It is possible to gain a vision so clear that it cannot be deceived. How much this clear vision is needed may be seen, for

ABOUT EDUCATION

example, by the rapid change of opinion in regard to the work of Walt Whitman in the last ten years. Literature is manifold. There is no coming to the end of its combinations. We are bound to keep the eye clear, the standard high, and the judgment practised. In doing this, we shall make, not only a better race of critics, but a race of better men and women. Perhaps you are wondering if all this work done on the masterpieces of literature is not sacrilegious. I reply that no one reverences them more profoundly than I. Certain uses to which they have been put are degrading. I for one am sorry to see Young's *Night Thoughts* and Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy* withdrawn from the field they have so long and so well filled,—the field of grammatical analysis. I do not wish to see Shakespeare's great lines —

. . . "This my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red" —

used as the text for a discussion of the derivation of "incarnadine" from the Aryan root *kru*. Nothing could be worse than using the greatest imaginative lines of literature for such carpenter-shop display. But

ENGLISH LITERATURE

to the work which may be done by the reverent pupil that thinks the master's thoughts after him, the great books yield their treasures. They lay open their very hearts for the sympathetic gaze of youth. Why should we keep young minds laboriously building houses of clay and plaiting straw when real timber, stones, and mortar lie ready to their hands? Leading an eager class through the wonders of *Macbeth* or of *The Idyls of the King* makes all the plodding among the dry books of studies whose material is not thus fascinating seem pathetically dull. I remember hearing one of my teachers say that he believed that in heaven every man, woman, and child would be a teacher of English literature. I suppose that the pupils in that case would be the angels!

There is no royal road to learning but this: it is possible to choose those subjects for investigation which shall unfold and vitalise all the parts and powers of the mind. In the Middle Ages, dialectics was taught as if the subject of the argument was of no account. Even now we sometimes talk about cultivating the power of reason as if it were a desirable or a reasonable process. But in the great realm of literature, in the

ABOUT EDUCATION

work of Shakespeare and Shelley and Lamb and Emerson and Carlyle and Browning and Tennyson, every power of our mind may find its stimulus. Am I dull and unresponsive? The fascinating story of Spenser and the tragedy of Shakespeare shall arouse me. Am I slipshod in mind? The matchless lines of the great poets beguile me to a reverent and accurate memory of them. Am I slow to read the secrets of human character? The men and women of Shakespeare and Thackeray and Hawthorne will first interest me, and then stand still while I study them and learn from them how to understand the folk among whom I live. Am I rude of taste and faulty of judgment? The highest excellence in minds as far apart as Tennyson and George Eliot, or Chaucer and Browning, compels my admiration and forces open my blinded vision; and; while all this is going on in my intellectual development, my spirit is refreshing itself at the great springs of human thought. Thus I think the study of English literature ought to send you back to that beautiful and generous library all the more eager to know it and all the better fitted to love it.

COURSES OF READING

COURSES OF READING

MY DEAR HELEN: I hope you won't be too much disappointed when I tell you that I am not going to send you the course of reading which you ask. You are old enough now and strong enough intellectually to go alone. I remember, years ago, I was driving with my father, a physician, one bitter cold winter day. He had been calling on an old farmer's wife and prescribing for her ills; just as we were starting out of the yard with a spirited horse, impatient from long waiting, the old woman came to the door with a red flannel petticoat over her head, and called out, "Doctor, doctor, you ain't told me what I'd ought ter eat." Father growled back, "If you've lived with yourself seventy years, Mrs. Googins, and haven't found out yet what you should eat, I don't believe I can tell you." And we drove away. Now you are not seventy yet by this fifty odd years, but you may as well learn first as last what you want to eat with your mind. A course of reading prescribed by anybody else is always a clumsy device. I once walked into the college library, to find the president's daughter, aged eight,

ABOUT EDUCATION

perched at a table with an enormous book before her. I went up to her, and said, "Nellie, what are you reading?" She replied, "Oh, papa has promised so many times to make me out a course of reading, and he never has; and so I have begun at Section I., No. 1, and I am going to read through the library." The poor child was not even discouraged by the fact that the first book was a huge volume on *The Monumental Architecture of America*.

The hundred best books, the books concerning any one period of history, the books that will be recommended for a given course of travel, are all of them crutches, not wings. I don't want you to go limping through the world with them.

What shall you read? First of all, what you want to read. This is, of course, on the supposition that, for the moment at least, you are away from the demands of the classroom or from the necessity of any special research to fit you for any given work. With a sound mind, and a taste at least unharmed by evil indulgences, and access to a fairly good library, all the better if it be not too large, this prescription should be safe for the average girl. Of course, the liking must

COURSES OF READING

be governed in regard to books as in regard to food, by some sort of judgment. The fact that you are very fond of ices and salads would not induce you to turn all the accepted rules of dining upside down, and have the ice and the salad as the first two courses of your dinner. The fact that you have a liking for the mysteries of detective stories, and enjoy nothing better than to treat yourself to a clever one, should no more cut you off from the reading of a great biography, a good history, or the masterpieces of literature, than your salad should cut you off from beefsteak. I know that I may take for granted good sense on the part of my reader, when I am writing to you. So when I say, "Read what you like," I expect you to like what is good for you; and I expect you to have a catholic taste.

There are thousands of women living to-day in American society who read a fairly large number of books in the course of a year, who pass for cultivated persons, who have and announce opinions on most subjects, and who read actually nothing except novels. There isn't much to be said about this habit: it should speak for itself. Of course, it is destructive not only to sound

ABOUT EDUCATION

intellectual life, but even, to a great extent, to the pleasure which comes from reading.

How absurd we should think it for a woman who lived exclusively on *soufflés* to pretend to taste in eating! Prose fiction is a great department of literature, but it is not all of literature. It happens to be a department which at the moment is much in evidence. It may not always continue to be so. Not to know something of the literature of other times, the stories of great lives, the discussion of great social and political theories, noble and stirring history, is to argue one's self of poor and mean attainment, and willing to remain ignorant. However, in the whole matter of fiction reading, I have never found argument of much avail. You see the thing straight, or you don't see it; and that ends the matter. It certainly is true, however, that no woman who spends more than half the time which she gives to reading in the reading of prose fiction will come to be a truly cultivated woman, and demonstrate her right to freedom in the great world of letters.

One book should continually suggest another. If you read *The Tale of Two Cities*, by Dickens, it should be followed naturally by the *Ninety-Three* of Victor

COURSES OF READING

Hugo, that by Taine's fascinating volumes, *Les origines de la France contemporaine*, and finally by the inimitable Carlyle, whose rush of words would have strangled you if you had attempted to breast the current before you were in training for it.

So a biography of Lincoln will raise questions which should make you want to know more about General Grant, and the reading of Miss Burney's fascinating *Evelina* should certainly send you to those volumes of Memoirs, in which the court of George the Third, with all its pomp and splendour and wearisomeness, lives again for us. The very slightest indication of a desire to read a book should be watched for in ourselves, as we watch in a child we love for the indication of taste in a given direction. The books which I have meant to read, and have forgotten, lie heavy on my conscience. I have always now on my desk a little notebook in which I scrawl the name of any book or article that promises to furnish me my daily meal. Not to listen to the voice of one's own judgment, taste, curiosity, is to lose the chance of becoming truly one's self. I am sometimes afraid of all the club life which leads the women of a town to

ABOUT EDUCATION

read the same books and talk about them the whole winter through. The individual should have a chance, even if the club suffer.

Not only should your reading be general, but it should be varied. Are you saying to yourself, "But has she forgotten that I have only an hour a day to read?" No. Still what can be done in an hour you will never know until you have tried for six months. Write in letters of gold the well-worn dictum of Bacon: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." Is this advice to practise what you would call "skipping" in the process of reading? I have had that question asked me so many times by perplexed students that I have a grudge against the word. Can I be said to have "skipped" a part of my duty because in eating an orange I have left the skin and the seeds? After one has graduated from the primer, is he conscious of the separate letters of the words which he reads? By practice one may come to regard the sentences of a paragraph, and afterward the paragraphs of a chapter, exactly as one regards the letters of a word. They convey their idea to the mind in a flash. That one should be able to

COURSES OF READING

explain or retrace the mental action is not necessary. Give me ten pages of history and ten minutes to squeeze out from its pages five facts that I want, and I shall do it easily. Give me, on the other hand, a single page of one of Shakespeare's plays, and I will spend an hour over it, and shall not then have discovered all its beauties. Reading may be like walking, it may be like dancing, it may be like flying. Every one of these motions is legitimate, and every one gives pleasure. Don't think about learning to "skip," but think about learning to read with a rapidity born of keen intellectual activity.

This one accomplishment gained, its complement is the learning to read with a deliberation born of deep thought. To apply the deliberate method to Mr. Howells's books or the rapid one to Shakespeare's plays would be absurd. Let nobody persuade us that the one method is the only one to be acquired. If you have an hour a day for reading, part of it may well be given to the one kind of book, and part to the other.

I wonder if you have ever thought that reading may be the idlest occupation in the world. Not long ago I asked a certain lady

ABOUT EDUCATION

of my acquaintance if she had read a novel that I had liked; and she replied: "I really don't remember, but I will surely get it to-morrow. You know I read about fifteen novels a week, and I forget them in a month; so every one is just as good as new to me." And she spoke with an air of satisfaction which made me suppose she thought she had discovered a new accomplishment. That kind of reading is really more injurious than sitting still and counting one's fingers, because it encourages intellectual hypocrisy which strikes deep roots into the character. One thinks one is doing something worth while; but in reality one is wasting force, time, and character.

At the other extreme lies a kind of laboured reading, which I also deplore. The young woman who sits down at a given hour of each day with a determined expression of face, and addresses herself to getting through so many chapters of *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* does not gain the best which that noble book has to bestow. Spontaneity, desire, enthusiasm, these are the very life of the reading which makes intellectual muscle. What is called "systematic reading" has its dangers. It is a temptation to begin to count

COURSES OF READING

the pages, and to estimate one's achievement not by one's real acquisition, but by the ground over which one has walked. If you end the hour with a sense of relief and of weariness, it has somehow been misspent. If you end it with the sense of regret with which one breaks away from a delightful friend, you have learned the secret that the book has to impart.

I don't say that the child should find all the reading pleasurable which is good for her, but at maturity, with the wealth that awaits us in the great literatures of the world, satiety and weariness surely should be rare visitants of the library. In spite of the dangers which hang about so-called "systematic reading," I do believe in sticking to the old-fashioned principle of having a given hour every day for reading, and standing by it in face of some family opposition. I know that whatever hour is selected is always sure to clash with somebody's plans, but personally I don't like irregular meals. They are sure to upset my digestion, and I don't begin my day well unless I can foresee in it the exact moment when I am to exchange the society of my living friends for that of my books. According to my thinking, no girl can live a healthy

ABOUT EDUCATION

social life without some intellectual food. She cannot have that food except from books, and one hour a day is none too much in which to feed the hungry mind. Every little while the question will come up of a divided duty. Is it the part of a good daughter to refuse some invitation or some demand for the sake of this book which, for its part, makes no reproaches when it is neglected? To this I am constantly replying: A good daughter can be a good daughter only when she is at her best. To ask her to be at her best without food would be most unreasonable and cruel. The book is as truly food as the loaf.

I like to keep on my study table a good biography or a noble history, a well-written novel and some acknowledged masterpiece of literature, either prose or poetry. I pass from one to the other with a freedom which you might call license. Sometimes every minute of my reading will be given to the biography. I remember with delight a rainy Saturday this winter when I sat from morning to night over the two huge fascinating volumes of the Life of Coventry Patmore. Shall we ever have so good a time again as over the volumes of Stevenson's

COURSES OF READING

Letters! In the midst of so exciting an experience it is surely right to indulge one's self to the full, but for the ordinary weeks of life we may arrange for a varied bill of fare.

I wish I had dared enter upon a description of the pleasures in store for the woman who has really once acquired the art of reading. The library becomes to her the heart of the home. Here she learns to know the world without and the world within as she could never know them except through the teaching of the masters of letters. One great literature after another beckons her to share its riches. Every year leads her farther into enchanted lands, until she comes at last to an old age not barren and fretful, but crowded with high thoughts and noble friendships, rich in wisdom, and rejoicing in the hope that eternity will offer opportunity to pursue the joys which have been tasted here.

ABOUT EDUCATION

THE READING OF FICTION

MY DEAR HELEN: Ought you to give up novel reading? By no means. The novel has come to stay; and, the sooner we all acknowledge that fact and make the best of it, the better. Undoubtedly, clandestine novel-reading has had a bad effect on girls, both mentally and morally. It is high time that we should all recognise the force which we have to deal with in modern fiction, and should turn it to good use instead of bad use.

You were always fond of statistics. So I will tell you that, from some observations I have made of girls, in summer and in winter, in school and out of it, I have calculated that, in the nine years of education from twelve to twenty-one, the average young gentlewoman reads a novel more than an hour a day. Thus she gives one and one-third years of solid working days to this occupation. Nearly one-eighth of the entire period covered by a girl's education is to-day spent in novel-reading. We try to fill the girl's hours and days with the ablest teaching, with discipline by mathematics and the classics, with acquaintance

The READING OF FICTION

with statesmen and generals, with the company of "the ever-living, high, and most glorious poets"; and meantime, in spite of us, she passes a large fraction of her precious educational years under the potent sway of the novelists. They may be good or bad, indifferent, stimulating, depressing, or degrading: they have their grip upon her, and she cannot shake them off. For my own part, I welcome the fact that fiction has come to play so large a part in the life of our young women. It has its frightful dangers, and I see many a girl yielding to them; but it is also a beneficent force,—a force whose good results we scarcely yet have begun to estimate. I want you to recognise this force, and make it do your bidding.

Let me tell you for the fourteenth time that the two elements in education are equipment and training in using that equipment. You know which of the two I think the more important. A handy man with a clumsy tool is worth five times as much as the clumsy man with the most approved modern appliance. I have seen a monkey-wrench turned into a whole carpenter's shop. Now equipment is the knowledge

ABOUT EDUCATION

of the world in which we live,— of science, of books, of philosophies, of languages, of the histories of times and peoples. Skill in the use of this equipment goes under various names. We call it efficiency, or executive ability, or tact, or charm; but, whatever we call it, it is the most important possession of the gentlewoman. If there is any market where it may be bought, her teacher should be the best patron of that market. Most of us behave as if we thought this power, like reading and writing, “comes by nature,” or that we have it or do not have it, as one has or does not have the measles. Not so. It may be learned, and learned by practice; and, whatever may have been true a century ago, it now appears that in the increasing complications of modern social life this is the only way it can be learned.

The first requisite for skill, professionally or socially, is a steady hand. Over-emotional strain is destructive of that. The old charge against novel-reading was that it enticed us into a world of unreality and one which unfitted men and women for ordinary daily life. Undoubtedly there are certain classes of novels of which this is true. It

The READING OF FICTION

was indeed true of many of the early English novels written by women. You will remember how delightfully Mr. Stockton ridiculed these in *Rudder Grange*, when he made Pomona retire from her cooking and dish-washing to a world peopled with dukes and duchesses, where coronets, elopements in high life, murders, balls, and garden parties made a combination as interesting as it was absurd.

In glancing the other day over a list of novels, I came upon the following titles in three pages: *Changed Brides*; *The Bride's Fate*; *The Missing Bride*; *The Unfaithful Bride*; *Cruel as the Grave*; *Tried for her Life*; *I Forbid the Banns*. Now the titles of these books are enough to know about them. It should not be necessary to warn any intelligent girl against them any more than to warn her against eating half-ripe fruit or mouldy cake. They are unreal, over-emotional, and set up false standards of life and conduct, dangerous, pernicious.

There is another class of novels which is unreal. These are not as demoralising as the first, but character does not thrive on their namby-pamby flavour. They are "goody" books, usually written especially

ABOUT EDUCATION

for girls; often the medium for so-called "heart-to-heart" talks. In them ordinary life is wrapped up in rose-leaves. Opportunities for splendid self-sacrificing achievements grow on every bush. Religion and love are charmingly confused, and young clergymen are likely to be the heroes.

For you, however, I fancy that a greater danger lies in the novels of the third class. In these a blind fate sits on the throne of the universe. Men and women struggle, toil, aspire, and suffer; and there is but one end for them all,—failure. Like the creatures of Addison's *Vision of Mirza*, they drop through the broken arches of the bridge which spans the chasm between the Whence and the Whither. These novelists preside over an earthquake country. No matter what verdure may grace it or what noble architecture may adorn it, destruction is assured for it. Of course, you know who are the arch-offenders in this way. The later Hardy and the later Henry James have much to answer for in the destruction of the moral poise of those who have read them. Reliance on a ruling beneficence is the first requisite for a healthy moral life. I must believe in the solidity of the world under my

The READING OF FICTION

feet. I must believe that God, and not the devil, sits on the throne of the universe. Every book which weakens or threatens or ridicules that belief is by so much dangerous to the structure of character and to that skill and steadiness of hand which we need to acquire. I need hardly add that such books are inartistic because untrue to the facts of life.

Now this substantially ends my case against the novel. That work of fiction which is false by virtue of its over-emotionalism or of its cynic pessimism is dangerous. Anything which is false is dangerous. To read all novels indiscriminately is just as unsafe as to eat without discrimination; but I am not going to abjure fish because some family dies of poisoning from stale fish.

Let us turn to the brighter picture, and see what the novel has to offer us for the increase of that refined skill which our girl must bring to her life. Every day she is set to some new task requiring a light touch, from the reorganising of a working-girls' club to the making of salad dressing, from the smoothing out of an irritating friction in a church committee to the saving of a baby's life by courage and skill in a critical moment. "The

ABOUT EDUCATION

proper study of mankind is man." In the able novelist we have a matchless guide to the mysteries and subtleties of human nature. I speak now of the master of the art. The people of his creation are as substantial, as true to life, as the folk among whom we move; but they have one interesting distinction from our next-door neighbours. Mr. Smith and Mrs. Brown put up sash curtains at their windows and lock up their hearts, and endeavour in every way to shut us out from that knowledge of motive and conduct which will help us really to know them. The imaginary characters of fiction, on the other hand, are eager to show us complicated motives, busy brains, and throbbing hearts. It goes without saying that we understand hundreds of fictitious characters better than those of our dearest friends. Hamlet, around whom has raged the fiercest battle of criticism for three hundred years, is better known to us to-day than his modern counterpart, General McClellan.

Nothing can be more necessary to our young woman than the ability to read human nature. We set her at work on a problem in algebra, and she successfully determines the one unknown quantity by the aid of the

The READING OF FICTION

two that are known; but the problems of life reverse the ratio, and we force our girl, in all good faith, to reduce the equation of life where she knows, at most, herself only, and perhaps not even herself. We do not inflict upon our friends her piano performance until fingers, ear, and musical sense have all been trained by years of practice; but she begins her service in the world in surroundings where the most complex conditions are found, and when she has had no experience in dealing with real men and women. "Life's business being just the terrible choice," the fifteen-year-old girl is scarcely expected to select the colour of a feather for her hat or the stuff for a gown; and at twenty we expect this girl to cope successfully with the most difficult social and moral questions. For crises there is no practice school. There is, however, one place where a fair idea may be had of how people should act and how they do act, in the varied and severe strains of life. This is the novel. I do not mean that all the heroines are or should be models of the virtues. Sometimes the most pointed sort of teaching is teaching "how not to do it"; but I mean that the springs of conduct, the methods of conduct, and the results of

ABOUT EDUCATION

conduct are set forth, and that teaching by example is brought to its highest perfection in the novel. I cannot, for example, imagine that a girl who has once read *Middlemarch* carefully and thoroughly and with a wise teacher looking over her shoulder, would ever make the mistake of thinking a marriage of duty right, not to say noble and self-sacrificing.

In the second place, the novel not only shows us by example how we must act, but it makes us desire to act as the novelist says it is right to act. We love persons, not theories. Sydney Carton, Lady Castlewood, the Princess Flavia, Romola, are better spurs to hard virtue than a hundred sermons.

Again, fiction enlarges our acquaintance, quickens our sympathies, removes us from the immediate circumstances of ordinary domestic life, and so makes us better able to bear its irritations when we must go back to them. The woman who has no resources is likely to be a fretful woman. Deliver me from the tongue of her who has no acquaintances except the men and women of her "set." George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Thackeray, Hawthorne, lead us into good society. In their volumes the doors of a

The READING OF FICTION

thousand hospitable houses are always wide open. They are ready to cure narrowness and provincialism,—those social diseases to which women have been so susceptible. Aristotle said long ago that “the office of tragedy is to cleanse the mind with pity and with terror.” So with the novel. Gracious drops are the tears which fall over the fortunes of people created by a master in his art, and deep and effective are the resolutions made by many a girl in a hammock as she passes a June morning over a novel.

The novel, like any great force, has its dangers and its victories. Its dangers lie in that emotionalism which is the menace of our age and our sex. Its promises are of greater skill, wiser tact, more ready hands and loving hearts for the world which waits in weakness and weariness for our touch. The future of the novel is immense. More and more will the novel glorify its office; and so more and more will it enlighten the mind, quicken the intuition, and deepen and broaden the sympathy.

THE ART OF SPEECH

MY DEAR HELEN: I sat for an hour yesterday on a train, behind a group of young girls, and heard perforce much of their conversation. Before I forget the impression it made upon me, I shall write you a little screed on the art of ordinary speech. There are three ways in which a girl reveals herself to the world. The first is by her appearance: her face, her figure, her carriage, and her dress all play their part in this appeal to the eye. The second is by her writing; and her notes and letters often tell a great deal of her personality. But the third, and far the most important, is by her speech,—by her way of saying what she has to say. This can easily override or even contradict the impression made by her appearance. You have seen many a pretty girl whose charm vanished when she began to speak, and many a plain one who became interesting and fascinating in conversation. Years ago I heard Bishop Vincent tell a story of his being in a Sunday-school room, and overhearing the talk of a young woman who was teaching a class. She was evidently enforcing the practical application of the lesson

The ART OF SPEECH

when he appeared on the scene; and, as he represented her, she spoke after this fashion: "Now, boys, I want you to be good boys. If you are good, and don't tease your little sisters, and always get to school in season, and mind your mothers, and never tell lies or do anything else that is naughty, when you die, you will go to heaven; and that will be just too lovely for anything! But, if you are naughty and tell lies, and won't run errands for your mothers when they want you to, and play truant from school, and rob birds' nests, when you die, you will certainly go to hell; and that will be just too ridiculous for any use!" Now Bishop Vincent, of course, was enforcing the need of trained teachers in the Sunday-schools; but he was illustrating at the same time what, for my purpose, I am going to call poverty in speech.

We expect the savage and the child to suffer from this poverty. There are tribes of Indians who have not more than three hundred words in their entire vocabulary, and the child acquires but a few hundred before he is ten years old. Every word, however, added to one's vocabulary is a real gain in the evolution of the individual. Of course, a word cannot be added to the vocabulary by

ABOUT EDUCATION

simply learning it out of a dictionary: it must really become a part of one's speech. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, in a Phi Beta Kappa address which I heard him give a short time since, enumerated what seemed to him the five essential characteristics of the educated man. Of these the first was ease, correctness, and precision in the use of his mother tongue. Now my young women on the train yesterday were talking over a german which one of them had just attended. I want to reproduce for you, if I can, the way she described it. "Oh, it was just great! The hall was a corker; and who do you suppose I had for a pard? Harry Jones, and he is a peach. We just bowled them all over. The music was immense, and the supper was the greatest thing you ever saw. Dick took me in, and I had the time of my life. You ought to see my favours! They are the greatest show on earth." You observe that this young gentlewoman (for such she was, at least by birth), in describing an evening of pleasure which was actually full of light, colour, and music, has used exactly two adjectives,— "great" and "immense." "Great" appears three times, and tells a lie each time. Her descriptive nouns are

The ART OF SPEECH

“corker” and “show,” “pard” and “peach.” It would seem as if the author of this startling description might well study the art of speech. I fear she is an exception only in degree, and not in kind, in the large class of girls to which she belongs. The evil of modern slang is not only that it is in itself unexpressive and ugly, but that it crowds out of use, and so out of mind, all good, vivid, descriptive words. It has exactly the same effect which profanity has upon the speech of a man who constantly indulges it. He presently arrives at the state where he has no other adjectives except the half-dozen profane ones that he has so repeatedly used. The street boy, as we find him represented in literature, has only a half-dozen adjectives not profane, “bloomin’” being perhaps the best example of one of them. In order to get any sort of right practice in speech, one must have a right theory about it. Let me see if I can simply and directly elaborate a theory for you.

In the first place, the whole matter of the use of words has both an intellectual and a moral basis. A person of very limited vocabulary cannot be a great thinker; and, conversely, a great thinker cannot be a person of

ABOUT EDUCATION

limited vocabulary. Sir William Hamilton has an admirable illustration of the relation of language to thought. The philosophers used to be fond of discussing the question whether thought could exist without language. Hamilton answered this by saying that thinking was like tunnelling through sand, and words were the props of timber which were put in place to keep the tunnel from caving in behind the workmen. In other words, one can think only a very short way without the important help of words. Morally, it may be said that truth-telling is the chief business of our social life. We rightly despise the lie; that is, the conscious and deliberate lie. I think the world is coming to have a very low opinion of the woman that tells half-truths, or lies, because she is incapable of fine distinctions in language. She certainly works havoc in society. Years ago I knew a shocking instance of misery and disaster as the result of a careless use of words. A young clergyman began to be pursued by a persistent rumour that he was addicted to the use of alcohol. For months he paid no attention to the scandal. Then it came to him so repeatedly that he felt he must trace it. Various difficulties attended

The ART OF SPEECH

this ; and, before he realised how serious the matter was, he found himself practically asked to resign by his parish, and really forced to do so, though he was absolutely innocent. At last, after months of effort, the ugly gossip was traced to the speech of a woman who had sat by him for two or three meals at the table of a summer hotel. In speaking of him, she said to some one that he was "an awful drinker," meaning to indicate by that phrase that he drank three or four glasses of water with each meal. The event which clouded the early career of the young man, and practically drove him into a distant State for his second charge, was all based upon that careless use of two words which, no doubt, to her seemed entirely innocent. I knew another case of a man who lost the offer of a fine position in a bank because a woman had said of his wife, "She must spend loads of money on her clothes." In point of fact, the wife was one of those clever women who have a knack of making clothes take on an air of their own, and was well dressed on a very small expenditure. The phrase "loads of money" made its own wicked impression,—a false one,—and was directly responsible for the unjust verdict.

ABOUT EDUCATION

Now these are only two cases, but they might be multiplied without perhaps increasing their force. No pains is too great to guard one against this sort of careless speech.

Women are usually reputed less truthful than men. There is something in the charge, though not so much, I am glad to believe, as there was fifty years ago. The actual fact, such as it is, has two reasons. Untruthfulness is a survival of the days when women, in order to get what they wanted, had constantly to resort to artifice against force. This is no longer excusable. As a sex, we may have anything we want by the same methods used by men. There is no reason that we should lie, in order to get our way. The other half of the habit laid to our charge is not really untruthfulness, but inaccuracy. No doubt this is so common, partly because we have not been held to any standard of accuracy, as men are in the business world. If a man makes a careless statement about another man on the street, he may find himself brought to book, even in court, for his words: whereas women go prattling on without responsibility, using the most general words, and often the least accurate ones.

The ART OF SPEECH

I think that girls generally believe that there is no alternative between extreme poverty of speech and pedantry. The last thing I should wish to do is to make you affected in your choice of words. I remember well a phrase which a woman used to me years ago, and which has always stood to me for the most absurd pedantry, though it is not in itself specially apt. I was apologising for having forgotten her name by saying that I had to meet so many people in the morning whom I was professionally obliged to remember that I found it extremely difficult to remember the people I met socially in the afternoon. "Oh, yes," she answered with a patronising air, "I understand perfectly. The visual centres have lost their resiliency." The well-chosen phrase is never the pedantic phrase. It adds a grace and charm, not a stiffness and affectation, to language. One earns the right to use a good word as the pioneer earns the right to his land,—by possession and cultivation. A word which would sound absurd from the lips of a coloured mammy comes with precision and force from the scholar. Mr. Barrett Wendell makes a charge against Webster which becomes empty to one who is

ABOUT EDUCATION

familiar with Mr. Webster's habit of thought and speech. Mr. Wendell says that the use by Webster in the speech at the White murder trial of the words "bludgeon" and "poniard" betrays "elaborate artifice." Not so. Those words were as natural for Mr. Webster as "billy" and "jack-knife" would be for some lesser man. Every human being should have a vocabulary which could be recognised as his own; and, the more cultivated the human being, the more extended is that treasure-house of words.

It is easy to say, "Enlarge your vocabulary: first, that you may enter upon the privileges of a cultivated woman; and, second, that you may be able to tell the truth easily and accurately." But it is another and more difficult matter to prescribe the means by which this is to be done. Every girl must, to a large degree, work out her own method. The reading of the best books and conversation with cultivated folk are both helps to the free use of words. The dictionary is your best friend for your task. Never allow a strange word to pass unchallenged. Usually, it is wise to look it up at the moment. If that is impossible, it must be written firmly on the memory and traced at the first opportunity. It is good to encourage in

yourself the habit of dawdling a little over the dictionary. It is the only place I know where dawdling reaps a harvest. To learn two new words a day,—thoroughly to learn them, so that their use will not have a foreign accent,—is to insure a large vocabulary before you reach middle age. Perhaps the only good rule which can be laid down for the acquirement of a speech rich, accurate, and effective is that you should become vitally interested in the study of words. No study is more fascinating, and none is more womanly. Volumes of history are wrapped up in them. The great steps of human advancement are marked by them. The charm of poetry is doubled to the man who knows and loves its magic words. The value of life is vastly enhanced for the woman who knows how to make words do her bidding in the service of truth. Society becomes truly worth while only when in it words are used carefully, accurately, and with that enthusiasm and spontaneity which deliver them from pedantry. Mr. Sill put the fact with the poet's vigour when he exclaimed,—

“Words, only words ; yet, save for tongue and pen,
This world were but for beasts a darkling den.”

ABOUT EDUCATION

TO-DAY'S PROBLEM FOR THE COLLEGE WOMAN

MY DEAR MARGARET: Now that you have obtained your degree of B.A., and are in possession of the precious diploma, I think I shall write you a little document, setting forth what I believe to be the greatest problem which is now confronting women who have had what is called "the higher education." In the last twenty-five years since I was graduated, the ground of controversy has shifted. Then the burning question was, What may we do? Women were forcing or coaxing their way into one occupation after another. I have lived through the day when it was unusual for a woman to be a physician, a trained nurse, a farmer, the manager of a business, a college professor, a decorator, or a business agent. Now all these are matters of course. I suppose the time will come presently when it will be equally usual for us to meet women in the profession of the law, of architecture, of dentistry, and so on. We have proved that we can do anything that we choose, and we can succeed in the doing. We can win money, position, and fame in any pursuit that appeals to us. Nobody says

TO-DAY'S PROBLEM

us nay. No door is closed to us, except perhaps the door of the poorhouse. The question, What may she do? has passed. In its place has come the question, quite as insistent and pertinent, What will she be? A bold and very critical man said to me the other day, "Oh, the educated woman is all very well, if only she was not so horribly unattractive." Of course, this is an exaggerated statement; but in it lies a great truth. Society is waiting at this moment to see whether the educated woman is to lose her charm. At present we are a little like pioneers in a new country who cannot, in the very nature of things, have much time for the amenities of life. It is no wonder that they become hard-handed, ungraceful, blunt, and hurried. They have severe work both behind and before them. We apologise for their shortcomings in gentleness and grace in exact proportion as we appreciate their hard conquest of the soil. But, when the pioneer period is over, it behooves them again to turn to beauty and sweetness, to renew their acquaintance with art, and to build up a cultivated society. Here are a few suggestions as to what our modern educated woman must do if she is to convince the world that she is

ABOUT EDUCATION

a finer type than the woman of the eighteenth century.

In the first place, she must abandon eccentricity. In the early days of colleges it was half taken for granted that the college woman must be eccentric in dress, or speech, or style. She wore oddity as a kind of badge. Many people objected to her. Very well, she would give them every opportunity to distinguish her from her sisters, and would accept their verdict without grumbling. Many college girls in my day wore a costume almost as distinct as the habit of a sister of charity. Maria Mitchell in her soft white neckerchief and her scant gray gown, her big boots and clustering curls, was a type to be imitated. Nothing could be more undesirable to-day. The educated woman must be tastefully and sensibly dressed, yet well within the demands of fashion. Eccentricity of any sort will come to be esteemed a weakness, not a power.

In the second place, I am sure that this new woman must not be so aggressive as her predecessor. Aggressiveness is unlovely. It is sometimes a necessary evil. Perhaps it was so twenty-five years ago for the women who were forcing their way into the privi-

TO-DAY'S PROBLEM

leges of education. To-day it is not: it accomplishes little except irritation. I have heard a story which delightfully illustrates this. Several years ago, when the electric cars first began to ply between Cambridge and Boston, motormen regarded them as a new toy, and delighted in putting on a high rate of speed over the road. Nervous passengers often found the experience a trying one. One day a spectacled young woman, evidently a student at what was then the Harvard "Annex," stepped out on the platform at Harvard Square, and said, to the astonishment of the motorman, "How many volts have you been running on the way out?" He was amazed, but told her; and she replied: "I want your name and number, and I shall report you at headquarters. That is twenty volts more than are allowed by law." As she stepped off to the street, the man exclaimed, "Darn this higher education!" I acknowledge that I sympathise with him, and fancy that that sort of aggressive reform might much better for the present be left to the sterner sex. Closely allied to the unaggressive demeanour that I should like to see cultivated, is the gain in repose, both of manner and of spirit, which our new

ABOUT EDUCATION

woman must make. She should do this because of the many resources which she has, and which her less favoured sisters do not possess. One of my college friends once told me that, in the anxious half-hour after she discovered that a large dinner party must be kept waiting at least an hour for the service of the dinner because of an untoward domestic accident, she steadied her nerves and called up her courage by reading Wordsworth's Sonnets. Now this is the extreme in the use of resource as a means to repose. No woman that reads and thinks two hours a day, as the educated woman ought to do, has any right to be as irritable or as fidgety as the woman who has no such resource.

A bad temper, peevishness, irritability, suspicion, envy, are the vices of poor, weak, ill-controlled natures. The Ph.D. who loses her temper because she is not elected president of the Shakespeare Club, and resigns her membership, is on exactly the same plane with the little girl who won't play in her neighbour's back yard because she cannot be "the lady of the house."

Again, I hope you and your contemporaries will greatly excel us of the older time in your adaptability. I like to believe that the

TO-DAY'S PROBLEM

educated woman will be easy to work with. She will take institutions as she finds them, and be able to work through them, in spite of their faults. She will not insist on tearing them down, that they may be built over again before they are good enough to work in. She will have a knack in the good New England phrase of "making things do." She will be, in other words, constructive rather than destructive. She will be oil, and not sand, in the machinery of life.

These are only some hints as to the directions in which I want you to look as you survey the field before you take up your chosen work in it. Twenty-five years ago I, too, was just out of college. On Commencement Day I delivered an essay from the college platform. I have forgotten everything about the essay except its subject, and the fact that I used a quotation from Lowell. The quotation has been well worn since then, but it has grown only the truer with the passage of time. I am going to ask you to write it on the tables of your memory; and it will be all the better if you associate it with my plea that the college woman, having been granted the freedom of the world, shall in the use of it be found nobler than in the past.

ABOUT EDUCATION

"New occasions teach new duties; Time makes
ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would
keep abreast of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! We ourselves
must Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through
the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's
blood-rusted key."

II. About Social Relations

WHAT IS YOUR CULTURE TO ME?

MY DEAR MARGARET: Life in college seems to be planned to cut the student off from ordinary human interests. She lives in a cloistered seclusion. Her best friends are books. Her greatest excitements are those of the class-room or the society hall. For four years she appears to be outside the stress and struggle of the arena where men and women are trying to get a living, are marrying and burying, loving and hating, succeeding and failing, in the ordinary routine of life. Now, when a girl comes out of college, is she really to be separate from these people from whom she has apparently been set apart? Nothing, to my thinking, could be more disastrous than that education should make a line of cleavage through society. It is cause for apprehension that wealth is likely to do that. Talk about the classes and the masses is painful enough in any country. In a republic it is dangerous. I remember that years ago, when I was in college, George William Curtis gave an address to some Western university, I think, the title of which was, "What Is Your Culture to Me?" Mr.

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

Curtis discussed this whole question as to the duty of the cultivated man to the great world outside the university. He took the ground, of course, that the man of the truest culture, instead of being indifferent to ordinary human life, should be most keenly sensitive to it. Hundreds of years before Mr. Curtis formulated his creed, the Roman dramatist Terence put the whole matter tersely for us: "I am a man, and nothing that is human is alien to me." If exclusiveness on the part of the educated woman is to be the result of modern education, it is proof positive of the poor, cheap character of that education. The human life teeming on the earth at this moment is vastly more important than the life of past centuries, now buried save for the pages of its record in books. Men and women are greater even than the natural laws which govern the universe. The man of science or of research who lets the world of nature or the world of the past obscure his interest in the living present, or cramp his service to it, is already half dead. The fact, however, remains that a cloistered period of life does seem to have a tendency to segregate the men and women who take part in it. I want to tell you what I think ought to

WHAT IS YOUR CULTURE

be done by you while you are in college to prevent you from finding yourself a foreigner in the real world when you are graduated.

In the first place, you must realise the need of cultivating a deep human sympathy, and the ability to put yourself in the place of another. You have no desire to become a "Dry-as-Dust" in the world of nature. Don't neglect the opportunities, few though they may be, that present themselves to you in college for keeping in sympathy with other classes of society and other methods of life than your own. The housemaid and the gardener have their own personalities. I recall a sentence or two in *Amos Barton* which long ago wrote themselves on my memory: "These commonplace people, many of them, bear a conscience, and have felt the sublime prompting to do the painful right. They have their unspoken sorrows and their secret joys. Their hearts have perhaps gone out towards their first-born, and they have mourned over the irreclaimable dead. Nay, is there not a pathos in their very insignificance, in our comparison of their dull and narrow existence with the glorious possibilities of that human nature which they share?"

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

History and literature must be aids to the nourishing of the human imagination. The modern method of treating history is far less impersonal than the one which obtained twenty-five years ago. Fiction, well used, opens to us a whole field of human character with which we may rightly sympathise, and whose motives and temptations we may study at our leisure. I think, too, no college student can afford not to read the history that is a-making about us every day. Much time is no doubt wasted over the newspapers; but that does not prove that we should not read them at all, or that we may not learn how to read them rapidly, intelligently, and sympathetically. The social tendencies of the time ought to be marked by us. It is not unlikely that many of your generation will find themselves face to face with even sterner social problems than those of the past fifty years. It would be a shame if educated men and women should not be prepared to meet them. We have no right to imitate the ignorance and indifference of the upper class of France which led to the horrors of the French Revolution. We must be ready to seek remedies for social evils. As you know, I do not believe that any social pro-

WHAT IS YOUR CULTURE

gramme or social revolution can actually much improve the conditions of society. The plain fact is that we must all be, in the country phrase, "better folks." The evils of the tenement house, of the crowded factory, of the underpaid workman, of the overworked servant, of the strike and the lock-out,—all these are to be remedied slowly and patiently by having the best men and women of the country bring to them their highest intelligence and their most heartfelt sympathy. For these problems I want you to fit yourself in college, not dreaming yourself away from them all into a fancied tranquillity, but making yourself the more ready to deal with them by virtue of the breathing-space given you by your college course, and of the point of vantage from which you may gaze at the whole panorama of the life of the future generation.

Let me make the whole matter a little more personal. It is often the fashion for college girls to speak as if vigorous dislikes were an indication of superiority. Exactly the opposite is the case. They are an evidence of limitation. We recognise them as such in all departments of life save in that of human relations. Because I admire Beethoven,

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

I need not detest Wagner; and, because Raphael's Madonnas are sacred to me, I need not think the pre-Raphaelites absurd. The truth is that the emergence from childhood to womanhood should stimulate the training of the taste in regard to people, as in regard to food and books. It may help in hastening this process of development if we learn what determines the preference of the child. It is easy to know this. He likes whoever serves or amuses him, he likes whoever flatters him, he likes beauty of form and feature, he likes strength which picks him up easily and bears him over difficult places. Now few, if any, of these qualities belong to the really fundamental elements of likableness. Every one of them may be possessed by a woman who is selfish or cruel. In order to keep our taste in men and women true and just, there are a few principles to be observed. In the first place, we must avoid "snap judgments." It is the fashion in the Senior year in college for many a girl to boast of an intuitive knowledge of character. She is never mistaken: she always "sizes a girl up" at the first interview. Nothing could be more certain proof of the super-

WHAT IS YOUR CULTURE

ficiality of her judgments. One hour or one day does not suffice to render us acquainted with a simple electrical machine. How much less, then, with the most complex structure the world knows, the human mind and character! Of course, it is necessary for us to consider more than the mere externals of personality. The old proverb that beauty is but skin deep has a profounder meaning than appears at a first glance. Sometimes it seems to me that except in the young girl, extreme personal beauty is almost an evidence of a certain hardness and coolness in character, since deep experiences and warm sympathies write their records in lines on the face; and these lines are not likely to be beautiful, judged by the standard of Greek art. Again, we women are likely to have the tendency to rate very high in the list of likable virtues the ability to flatter. The love of admiration is essentially a feminine trait; and it is not desirable that it should be obliterated, but only that it should be kept subordinated and in its proper place. Tact in turning a pretty phrase is not character. It is an accomplishment which does not wear very well. We must learn

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

to discover beneath the surface the more important elements of character before we can be trusted to form just judgments of people. Above all, though, if we are to make our likes and dislikes true guides, and if we are to guard ourselves against the exclusiveness which renders the educated woman inefficient in this present world, we must try every day really to see the human race as it is,—a great, struggling brotherhood,—our brothers and our sisters, bound together by a common origin and a common destiny.

Two travellers meet on a wide plain. Each is weary and lonely. After one instant of surprised silence, one says to the other: "Whence come you?" "I do not know. And you?" "I know not. And whither are you going?" "Into some strange and unknown land. And you?" "I do not know." Will not these lonely wanderers join hands, and rejoice that at least in this mysterious and trying journey they need not fare alone? Is human fellowship and human sympathy less natural because the pilgrims are not two, but a throng which no man can number? Mistaken, indeed, is she who, out

The EDUCATED GIRL

of an exclusiveness which she calls superiority, lingers ever on the edges of the crowd, nor hastens to lend her hand wherever the wicked, the weary, or the faltering, need her service.

THE EDUCATED GIRL IN SOCIETY

MY DEAR HELEN: I wish you to find your place in society, whatever that place may be. I hope and believe you will have opportunity to test various rôles as the years go by. You must not disdain any of them. There is a place for you in the remote village without a library, in the whirl of your first winter in a great city, or in the humdrum life of a town which seems to you narrow and provincial because it has no Shakespeare club and no Symphony concert, no young men who have read Hardy and Meredith, and no dinner-parties of the conventional type.

Now there is one task before you and your class, wherever you go in society. It is to furnish the standard of taste. In books and in art this will be comparatively

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

easy. You must try to do it, of course, without seeming pedantic. In amusements and in manners it may be more difficult. We laugh often at the efforts at amusement made by rustics. Kissing games and picnics seem tame to us. I doubt, however, if they are really more monotonous or less stimulating than vaudeville shows and afternoon teas. Somewhere, hidden away in the clever brain of the modern woman, I am sure there must be amusements more fitting her needs and those of the society in which she is to be queen. Seek for them. Avoid, gently but firmly, taking part in such amusements as you know to be beneath you.

In manners, again, the young woman may sometimes find herself put to shame by those who have not had her privileges. She does a bad service to society when she carries to it both hands full of slang, under the impression that it is vivacity, and a good deal of boisterousness, passing it off for high spirits.

"Never the second best," is a good motto for our modern girl; and, while she lives up to it, she need not placard herself as the champion of a view, but, with a tact which shall win for her friends on all sides,

The EDUCATED GIRL

she must make them see the beauty of the first best and long to imitate it. I always liked the compliment of an honest farmer whom I once knew. He said of a girl passing through a pretty long course at a boarding-school, "Well, I expected Ann Jane 'ud be stuck up; but, every time she comes home, seems ez ef she's more like folks."

Taste, however, is not all of life. Society is beset to-day, as never before, by temptations to the lowering of the moral standards. This is partly the result of the mad race for excitement. It is partly the result of the shifting of many standards in the world of business. For whatever reason, then, the *débutante* is brought face to face with some very serious ethical questions. Shall she play bridge whist for money? Shall she bet a tiny sum on a yacht race or a horse race? Shall she take a few shares in the big doll raffled at a fair? If she refuses to do these things, she is preparing for herself some bad quarter-hours. I knew a conscientious girl ridiculed into a fit of tears and a subsequent nervous headache because she refused to bet twenty-five cents on a canoe race at a summer hotel. The fact remains, however, that the evil of

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

gambling among women has become grave enough for one of the sanest clergymen in New York to lift up his protest against it. The woman who could calmly insist upon the payment of four hundred dollars which a young man on a salary of two thousand dollars had lost to her at bridge whist in a single evening probably began her gambling operations by the raffle and the ten-cent bet. No passion grows more rapidly by what it feeds on than the passion for getting something for nothing. It is destructive of every noble principle. Exactly where the whole business of the stock market is likely to land the men who engage in it is yet a grave question. Certain it is that the path of women in this respect is clear. No wager, no raffle, no game of chance or skill played for money! Those are the simple laws which the high-minded girl should lay down for herself. She must be prepared to suffer for them if need be; but she may properly lessen that suffering by setting forth her practice with great gentleness and with no hint of self-righteousness. She may trust to the force of her example to persuade others, and may decline to assume the rôle of moralist for her friends or for older folk.

The EDUCATED GIRL

What may be called "the light touch" will stand her in good stead in such a situation. She needs to be firm without being offensive, definite without being reproachful. It is not necessary that Virtue should wear hob-nailed shoes. Let it be daintily shod, and both light and sure of foot.

Another perplexity, hardly less difficult, meets the *débutante* in many of our towns and cities. Such a one wrote me not long ago : "What am I to do about dancing with a man who always drinks too much champagne at balls? And should I invite him to my house? Can I even recognise a man whom I have seen drunk,—not once or twice, but often? I may as well tell you that, if I draw the line and leave these men off my list, I shall greatly reduce the number of my available dancing men." I see no ground which is really tenable except the lofty one of refusal to compromise with open vice. Here, again, there is a demand for a combination of tact and frankness. I believe that a girl may well have courage to say plainly to a man whom she has seen intoxicated that she cannot ignore the fact. She need not preach to him or plead with him; but she may simply and gravely tell him that she sees but one course

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

open to a self-respecting girl,—that of depriving herself of the pleasure of his acquaintance in the interest of her own standard of self-control. There is always a chance that a man will think such a statement is some new kind of a flirtation, destined to lead to nothing more serious than a subsequent greater intimacy. It must be made with a gravity and definiteness which will forbid that interpretation. I suppose you know without my saying so that I think no girl should touch wine or punch or any other intoxicant, at least until she is twenty-five years old. When she has reached that age without the indulgence, she may, if she wishes, consider carefully all the arguments on each side. The conclusion at which she arrives will then be at least the result of her calm judgment, enlightened by far more experience than the young girl can have.

The responsibilities of the débutante are not confined to questions of her own social conduct and that of others. She is bound to have a part in the wider life of the community and to share its perplexities. You must find ways, by means of your trained mind and your quick intuition, to effect the much-needed compromise between organisation and

sentiment in the solution of the problems which we call those of charity. What is wanted, in order to straighten out all the tangle of social conditions, is a machine with a judgment and a heart. The old conception of Charity that figured her as a woman throwing coins into the street to a horde of scrambling beggars, does not satisfy us to-day. Neither, on the other hand, should we picture her as a nickel-in-the-slot machine, into which a pauper must drop some specified record, in order to get help.

Women have always been accused of dragging into everything the personal equation. Never was the personal equation more needed than to-day, in the factory, the mill, the shop, and the kitchen. Women must be the ones to introduce it. I remember, years ago, when a great strike had been working misery in one of our New England cities for weeks, I asked one of the workmen: "How does it happen Mr. Bowen's mill has kept running? It is the only one in the whole city, isn't it?" "Yes," said the man, "but it ain't so big as some; and him and her always looks after the hands when they're sick." There was a whole treatise on sociology in the phrase. The personal touch was

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

the saving one in that case, and will be in many a similar one.

My modern girl is going to apply the Socratic injunction, "Know thyself." This will help her oppose a vigorous arm against that foe of society,—nervous exhaustion. Let us tell ourselves the truth about this disease. It is the kind of trouble which we look for in the locomotive of the unpractised engineer. As long as the machine does its work, he takes no pains to drop a bit of oil here and to polish a rod there, because he has no just idea of the effect of friction and heat upon mechanism. The skilled mechanic knows that the years of his machine's life depend far more upon his wisdom in looking after the details of its intricate mechanism than on his zeal in stoking. Poor health is, eight times out of ten, the result of poor judgment and poor self-control.

In society my new girl is going to furnish a real standard by which to measure conduct on a human basis. She will distinguish between show and substance. To use Carlyle's fine words, she will "look through the shows of things to the things themselves." She must not be deceived by shallow humbug. She will carry a tuning-fork more accu-

The EDUCATED GIRL

rate and delicate than any ever wrought of silver; and she will catch its note clear and strong whenever she sets it vibrating. She will know that there must be a place and a time where every lofty desire must be satisfied, and where justice is done both to evil and good; and for that time and place she can afford to wait. She will have an intuitive, unerring perception of what is, perhaps, the most potent secret of the universe,—the relation of each day's life to some noble future.

To sum it all up: the future woman will be a force in society stronger and better than we now dream. I like to think that she will not grow less winning as she grows wise or less loving as she grows achieving. I like to think of her as worthy to be the counsellor of the statesman, the teacher of the little child, the inspiration of the artist, the arbitrator of contending factions in the domestic world, and still and forever the ideal of the poet.

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

THE MANNERS OF THE MODERN GIRL

MY DEAR MARGARET: A well-known dramatic critic writing recently of Mrs. Curtis, author of a play called *The Spirit of '76*, says, "She really predicted in the next sequent generation of young women that union of virile athleticism and sophomoric *abandon* which makes the manners of the twentieth-century girl so engaging." There is openly spoken the charge that has been whispered for the last fifteen years. It is charged that the manners of the modern girl are lacking in all that they should have, and have all that they should lack. The accusation is supposed to come largely from their elders; but I remember hearing it once in its most scathing form from the mouth of a young girl,—and she was a Western girl. She stood, looking out of a window, observing the conduct on the street of a group of New England young women. Her pretty lips curled with scorn as she said, "If I behaved like that on the street in Des Moines, I should never be asked inside a nice house there again in my life."

The unfriendly critic of the liberal educa-

tion of women is sure to fortify his arguments with the statement that college-bred women are underbred and have none of the graces of life. The pulpit and the newspaper vie with each other in regret or admonition over the decay of social graces. It is high time that we should reason together about this question of the manners of the twentieth-century girl.

First, we must remember that generalisation about any such matter is sure to be misleading. If we gathered our impressions from the newspapers alone, it would be easy to believe that there were no happy marriages, no honest bank officers, no incorruptible politicians. The discordant makes itself heard above the harmonious. Ugliness pushes beauty aside, and crowds its hateful visage into the foreground. One ill-mannered girl in a railway car full of school-girls off for vacation will obliterate the impression of the gentle and considerate manners of twenty other girls in the same car. I like to bear my testimony to the fact that I know hundreds of girls whose manners are as elegant as those of the seventeenth century, and withal as genuine as the twentieth century could wish them to be.

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

Still there remains a great mass of rudeness to be accounted for and dealt with. For one reason and another it is here ; and, until we acknowledge its presence, we are not prepared to cure it.

Why has it come ? Largely as the result of a misconception of the nature of manners and their use in society. Forty years ago there arose a hue and cry for sincerity as against sham. Voice after voice took up the note. Carlyle and Emerson were leaders of the movement. Close on them came John Stuart Mill, and on his heels were all the leaders of the efforts for the so-called emancipation of women. Democracy in the United States had its share in the chorus. Unitarianism was loud in its denunciation of what it characterised as formalism. The new educators, like Horace Mann, and the new theologians, like Horace Bushnell, were allies in their hatred of conventionality of thought and creed.

In the midst of this crusade against forms and conventionalities, it would have been strange, indeed, if the most obvious of all forms and conventionalities had not been attacked,—the forms by which for ages civilised men have tacitly agreed to govern the details of their daily life.

The plea that the individual should have full and free development, speedily led to the disuse of authority in respect of the manners of the young, and shortly to their total discredit. A mother once said to me that she did not wish her daughter taught conventional manners, that she thought them as objectionable as borrowed clothes. That same daughter is now one of the most ill-mannered women that I have ever known.

Nothing could be more absurd than this conception of the function and value of manners. They are not a rôle assumed for the purpose of deception or a second-hand garment donned to impose upon the spectator with a fraudulent elegance. Gentle manners, in their ultimate analysis, are nothing more nor less than a set of rules adopted by cultivated people to aid in playing their parts in life easily, swiftly, naturally. They are to a woman in society exactly what good training is to a servant. It has long, for example, been the custom — and it is founded on good sense — that a waitress should pass all viands on the left side of a guest, that he may serve himself with his right hand. Suppose some advanced and original waitress organising a rebellion against that excellent rule, and de-

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

claring it a slavery to which she and her friends will no longer submit,—such a rebellion would be exactly like the reaction against good manners which has afflicted our time.

We may go a step farther in the analysis of manners, and explain that, as the rules governing the waitress are based on convenience and good sense, so those imposing gentle manners are based on good feeling and a warm, sympathetic heart. The egotist, who goes through the world shrieking, “I am as good as you, and better!” can never be possessed either of a clear vision or a ready sympathy. In other words, she is by so much behind her gentler neighbour in the scheme of evolution. That she should pride herself on her very failure is the last touch of absurdity. She vaunts her crudeness as originality, her lawlessness as independence, and her egotism as self-culture. Her audience are fain to smile,—since they can do nothing more effectual,—and wish her day were over.

There are two human relations the recognition of which underlies most of the customs required by good manners. These relations are those of the inferior to the

superior — whether in age, in learning, or in position — and those of the strong to the weak. The ill-mannered woman continually ignores these, though they are among the most fundamental facts of life. By every act she proclaims her conviction that she has no superior, and so testifies to her own stupidity.

Let me give you a concrete instance of this. A party of young men and women were seated on the veranda of a country house. Every chair was occupied. Presently there walked slowly and feebly up the path an elderly woman, well known to the world of society and of letters. She was a beautiful figure,—a woman who had helped to make history and who now wore modestly, but with dignity, the crown of a people's gratitude. Now exactly what should those young people have done on her approach? Various courses were open to them. One might rise and offer chair and greeting. The boys might rise, and the girls might sit. They might all remain seated,—as they did! As a witness to the scene, I received an indelible impression as to the character and breeding of each person in that company. By all the laws of cultivated society the action of each should

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

have been so swift as to be automatic. The Queen! Make way for her! That sense of proportion that is one of the most precious possessions of the educated girl should have grasped in an instant the demand of the situation; and the courteous greeting should have been a tribute not only to age and charm and power, but to the right-mindedness of those who rendered it. I have written at length of this instance because I think the habit of rising when our elder or our superior enters a room is highly significant of our whole attitude toward the rules of gentle society. The courteous gesture of rising makes a place for itself in the habit of a well-ordered life, and presently becomes as instinctive as it is gracious.

Even more beautiful is the tribute that the strong pay to the weak. When I saw last month a tall, vigorous girl leave a group of laughing friends in a street-car and offer her seat to a working-woman with her arms full of bundles, I knew that I had seen a noble human impulse in its spontaneous expression. So with a voice "soft, gentle, and low," — it is the instinctive recognition of the rights of others and contribution to their comfort. No requirement is made by the code of good manners that judgment and heart will not ratify.

Far down in the scale of being we find the oyster, glued to his rock and oblivious of his neighbour, absorbed in his own absorption. Distant from him, at the other end of the scale of being, is the gently-bred woman, quick to see her relations to one and all, and skilful to adapt her own refined and attractive personality to the need of the moment.

One more word, and I have finished. When a woman really has the finest manners, they are not for use on especial occasions or for especial people. They are hers; and, wherever she goes, they go with her. The girl who is suave and engaging in public and snappish and inconsiderate at home shows that her breeding is pinchbeck. Years ago I read in some novel a sentence on manners, which clung to my memory, and which puts picturesquely a profound truth. In speaking of the heroine, the author said, "Her manners grow on her like leaves on a tree. They are beautiful, and they are her own." One need not push the analogy too far; but it is easy to see that for a tree to disdain its leaves because they are not its roots would be suicide for the tree. Our twentieth-century girl must not rank gentle manners with mint, anise, and cummin; for

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

they belong to the weightier matters of the law. You and I must try to hasten the day when it shall be a matter of course that a woman that makes claim to be thought an educated woman shall be mistress of a decorous and gracious manner, and shall regard it as a precious heritage to pass on to her daughters.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF MODERN GIRLS

MY DEAR HELEN: No wonder you are getting a little tired of hearing your peculiar advantages as a modern girl enumerated. I was told some hundreds of times how much better off I was than my grandmother had been; and with you this extends to your mother, who professes herself envious of all your new privileges. The fact remains that the modern girl has as many peculiar difficulties as she has new advantages. Generally, the ignoring of the difficulties in any problem is the best way of conquering them. Napoleon's famous dictum, "There shall be no Alps," is a useful one. On the other hand, when he spoke the words, he knew

ON DIFFICULTIES

better than any other man the precipices, glaciers, and crevasses over the perils of which he was to lead his army. Once in a way, then, it does us no harm to face the situation; and I am going to write to you about what I think the special difficulties to be met by girls like you.

The first is that, in every department of life, modern society expects, and often demands, of a girl far more than she can actually give. The clever girl may contrive to make people believe she is able to fill their ideal, but her own deepest conscience gives the lie to their approval. Physically, the girl must not only be well, but she must be athletic. Tennis, rowing, canoeing, skating, golf, are no longer pleasures in which she may engage if they suit her taste, but accomplishments which no girl can afford to lack. In the face of all these demands upon her strength, and partly because of them, she has the most sensitive nervous system that has been produced by any race of women in the world, and must continually guard herself against wrecking it, either by neglect or by over-care.

Intellectually, the mere number of

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

branches of learning has been multiplied by three in the last fifteen years. To the Latin, French, *belles-lettres*, history, mathematics, and astronomy, which constituted the excellent basis of your mother's education, have been added Greek, German, physics, chemistry, biology, physiology, philology, psychology, sociology; and there must be laboratory work in them all, from the study of a shell-fish in its native habitat to the study of the young child in the nursery.

A strange trick has been played upon our modern girl intellectually while all these other changes have been going on. Curiosity has been fairly laughed out of her field. For generations women have been reproached with being curious; and at last, in this latest time, the reproach has become so deep that they have become ashamed to show curiosity. If I am ignorant, I remain so, or I wait for a moment when I may satisfy my thirst for knowledge in private. Before that moment comes, ten to one I shall have ceased to care to know; for the passion of curiosity, unlike what the poets would have us believe of the passion of love, thrives but poorly on denial. I would

ON DIFFICULTIES

rather, myself, that a girl should rise from the table in the midst of dinner to find out the pronunciation of a word or the author of a quotation than that she should wait for a leisure moment. A sanctified curiosity is one of the most useful powers in the world; and my modern girl is at liberty to add to the small modicum of slang which I allow her the delightful Yankee phrase, "I want to know."

Closely related to the disavowal of curiosity on the part of modern girls is their disavowal of the power of intuition. They have been brought up to admire logic and its accuracy, and to distrust results which are reached by any other process. Only the other day one of my girls told me that she got hopelessly lost down town, in Boston, simply because she thought she ought to look up her destination on a map before she started out instead of trusting the "spirit in her feet," which, she knew, would have led her right. For my own part, I would rather have an enlightened intuition as a guide than all the rules one could formulate in a lifetime. Mind you, I say an *enlightened* intuition.

Socially, the demand upon a woman has

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

been multiplied by a larger number than three. The home has stretched out to include every relative living within twenty miles. Society is no longer a matter of one town or one city, but of the half-dozen towns and cities within a half-day's journey. I heard the other day that theatre parties were frequently made up in Detroit for an evening's pleasure in Chicago. With school friends scattered over all our wide country the visit becomes an important part of the young girl's life. The club, the associated charities, the college settlement, each adds its new demands to the old ones laid upon the girl eager to do her fair share in the great work of the world.

The programme of the day of a popular and conscientious "society girl" that really wishes to do her duty in the station to which God has called her, is a portentous one. She breakfasts at nine because she has a Puritan conscience as to late morning hours. She practises her piano or violin until half past ten. She goes to a committee meeting for a working-girls' club that lasts till eleven. A call on a sick cousin and a whist class fill every instant till half past one. Then she goes to a luncheon given to a distinguished

ON DIFFICULTIES

novelist, where she adds to the usual perils of eating the excitement of a little speech, which has been carefully conned the night before. Three afternoon teas, an hour at the gymnasium, a shampoo, a dinner followed by a theatre party, make up the rest of the programme till midnight.

Meantime, all through the day she has been cherishing in the bottom of her mind theories about the desirability of doing her own mending; questions as to how she is to keep up her reading, and an uneasy conviction that she ought to be with her brothers more and know them better.

Religiously, the world of women has undergone a strange transformation in the last two generations. The modern girl suffers from two great tendencies,—the reaction against the religious cant of a generation ago and the acquiescence in the scientific doubt of the last twenty years. The combined result of these two forces has been that religion has been held apologetically, if at all, to be a serious part of a woman's life. Nothing could be more disastrous to a modern girl than the morbid fear of mentioning, or even conceiving, the greatest facts in the universe,—the spiritual facts. It is

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

an age of excitement, of conflicting demands, of immense expectations; and for such an age to be cut off from the great springs of repose, of judgment, of wisdom, is like sending an army into a stressful campaign, cut off from a base of supplies.

Then, with this impoverishment of the spiritual forces, has come an attack upon the moral standards. Who knows what is right? Where does conventionality end, and righteousness begin? Shall I obey the Decalogue, or must I master, first, Spencer's *Data of Ethics*? To send a girl into the world as it is, with a feeling that she must settle every moral problem anew, is a desperate and cruel business; and the wonder is that it does not more often lead to moral ruin.

I believe I agreed to set forth for your consolation only the difficulties of the modern girl, but I suppose I must at least hint at the remedies which, I believe, are waiting for all these difficulties. If the physical demand is great, the physical repair must equal it. Intelligence, conviction, and wisdom must go to the adjustment of rest, sleep, and food.

Intellectually, the girl must betake herself to her field with an enthusiasm which shall



ON DIFFICULTIES

make work pleasurable. A sense of humour is a great lubricator of the machine over which we bend. So is curiosity. A frank lack of shame in pardonable ignorance, and a great desire to set it right, are fine labour-savers. "I don't know" and "I want to know" should be on every girl's lips a dozen times a day. If there are a hundred new realms of knowledge, she must select more carefully the large from the small. She must be more intelligent in regard to her own education, doing for herself again and again what nobody else can do for her.

The only remedy for the extreme social pressure which is put upon the modern girl is the constant practice of self-control, the power of selection, and the ability to say "No." It needs tact and courage to refuse one invitation after another, whether they are for dinners, balls, or committees; but the girl who will be a real force in society must know how to choose wisely and to refuse without giving offence. It ought to be esteemed a disgrace for a girl to break down at the end of her second winter in society because her judgment and her will failed her at her need. To be in a scramble from one week's end to another means that

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

one is never to be at one's best. Poise is to be preferred to popularity, if one must sacrifice one to the other.

In the realm of religion there must be a marriage of the intellectual and the spiritual, — not a farther divorce of them. Every aid to reverent spirituality ought to be seized. If the churches do not help as much as they ought, they must be made to help more. The two greatest powers in the experience of a woman, as far as religious life is concerned, seem to me solitude and worship. Well for her if she may have each of them every day! To cut herself off from either for weeks at a time is a kind of starvation which she has no right to inflict on herself.

In solitude only, or perhaps in solitude enriched by the poet, may be cultivated the great ideals of life and conduct which our age finds waning. Man lives by ideals. The value of men and women in this world depends upon the ideals which they cherish.

Plato in the *Phædrus* sets forth in a splendid myth the means by which the gods refresh themselves. Once a year, in a mighty host, they drive their chariots up the steep to the topmost vault of heaven. Thence they may behold all the wonders and the secrets

The DEMANDS OF VACATION

of the universe ; and, quickened by the sight of the great plain of truth, they return home, replenished and made glad by the celestial vision. Such a journey must the woman's soul constantly make if it is to keep its ideals clear and pure, and to live above the rush and haste of modern life.

THE DEMANDS OF VACATION

MY DEAR MARGARET : In a week you will be going home for your first vacation. I suppose at this moment you are thinking of it chiefly as a time when you may sleep as late as you like in the morning, eat all of your favourite dishes, enjoy the pleasant flattery of family attention and the sensation of finding yourself the centre of interest in your little circle. I should like you to philosophise a bit about vacations, however, before you enter upon this one ; and, at the risk of making you even more tired than the final examinations leave you, I must remind you of some of my theories about the best way of spending the summer months. In the first place, what really is rest ? It is certainly not cessation from activity or from companion-

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

ship. Two days of sleep and solitude are all you would be able to enjoy. Again, nobody who is more than fifteen years old can pretend that rest is long indulgence in a dissipation which leaves the body weary and the heart and mind cynical. I suppose, after all, the old rhyme has the root of the matter in it : —

“Rest is not quitting this earthly career :
Rest is but fitting one's self to one's sphere.”

To translate it into the language of modern science, “Rest is the perfect adaptation of activity to environment.” As long as we remain human, we shall not find our rest in the imitation of the oyster or in that of the dragon-fly. To be doing something pleasant, and to be doing it well under favouring conditions, is probably the most restful thing in the world. If this is the case, the very first element in a good vacation is harmony in the family life. You will go home tired. You will feel the relief from the pressure of living among strangers. These two facts may well enough lead you to be a little irritable the first week. Now irritability grows by what it feeds on. Bad temper is the vice of the virtuous. One week of it

The DEMANDS OF VACATION

may spoil a whole summer by the general tone which it sets in the home. You find some custom at home which you think objectionable. You believe your judgment is sounder or better informed than that which has so far ruled in the house. You begin to make your little criticisms; and they lead to discussion, and that to a general sense of opposition and discord. Now in point of fact there is scarcely any of the minor evils which might not better be harboured in a household than a bad temper. It gives pain without doing any good; and one of its baleful effects is that presently it is taken as a matter of course, and the family settles down to the cynical belief that every family is as badly off as it is. Irritation and discord become the rule, only to be temporarily concealed when the presence of a guest enforces good manners and polite reserve. In contrast to all this, I think your family has a right to demand of you, by virtue of your year of intellectual training, a clearer understanding of every person and problem included in the domestic life. Clear understanding never breeds irritability, but rather a high philosophy, calm patience, tact. You ought to carry home with you, even if you

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

are tired, a new and higher ideal of conduct and a clearer view of the dignity of social service. You wish to serve your time and your kind. You think gently and charitably of the pain and squalor of the slums. You would like to give some portion of your hope and cheer to those who sit in darkness. You must begin at home. Be the sweeter daughter, the wiser and more affectionate sister, and the more loyal friend. Do not be so cowardly as to fear exhibiting improvement lest you should be considered to be "putting on airs." It will not do your brothers a bit of harm to think you, for the moment, "too good"; and they will soon find out their mistake.

Both society and your immediate circle have a right to expect you to be full of new resources and of new charms. If education is worth anything, it should make you a more desirable member of society. You should have a wider charity and a kindlier tongue and judgment. Your hand should be more skilful and your observation more keen. Whether you are helping to get up a church fair, to organise a picnic, or to bring the household through a crisis with a sick cook, you should show yourself more thoroughly

The DEMANDS OF VACATION

mistress of yourself. In spite of their loving desire not to be critical of you, it will be impossible that your family should not expect more of you than they expected a year ago. Let them find it. Exhibit, above all things, a womanliness so definite and so deliberate as to be a real force in stemming the tide of the fashion setting toward the so-called "new woman." She is no woman at all, but a poor imitation of a more ordinary article, as if one should pretend that the coarse, flaunting meshes of an imitation Torchon lace were to be preferred to the exquisite workmanship of fine old rose point. The cigarette-smoking, champagne-and-cocktail-drinking, slang-talking, scandal-loving, convention-defying girl is here. She will form a fine background for every womanly charm which you can present. Whatever else college has given you, do not let anybody believe that it has made you admire that sort of a product. Refrain from brag. Do not pretend to be naughty. In short, magnify whatever dignity and sweetness you possess; and let it be seen that the study of trigonometry has not helped to make you mannish or coarse.

It is not enough, however, for you to refrain from irritability or from loudness in

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

your first vacation. I wish you to have a positive attitude toward society and the home. This ought to be based on a fresh and deeper recognition of the personality, the rights, and the desires of others. You must study those among whom you live as you have this year studied a book or a problem. Hitherto you have taken these people for granted: now begin to set the new powers of your mind to the beneficent work of learning how you may serve them. Especially do not try to make the whole household revolve about your desires. Try rather to make your desires serve those of the household. For example, I cannot believe that breakfast two hours later than the time at which your father takes his is of so much importance to your physical welfare that you can afford to disregard the pleasure you might give him by breakfasting with him, thus adding to his courage and strength for the day. Small physical indulgences easily count up to destroy the ease and unity of the household. You will be surprised to find how much work you can actually do in vacation, and how much pleasure you can give even while you are resting, if you get the right attitude of mind toward your duties. "Easy does

The DEMANDS OF VACATION

it," is a good motto for July and August, but must not be made to read "Easy does not do it."

Finally, I believe that you already have a new ability to relate the deeper facts of life to those "of every day's most quiet need." If you "see through the shows of things to the things themselves," you will not fret about small matters. A personal disappointment will take its proper place among the trifles of life. Gratitude will become easier. Personal service will be sweeter, and all the small irritations which come day by day will be forgotten before they have been fairly recognised. When the end of vacation comes, you will find it far pleasanter in retrospect than it would have been if you had made it from beginning to end a continuous self-indulgence; and you will get back into the mood of regular college life in the autumn without any of that jar and strain which will come if you go out of three months of absolute idleness into the stress and rivalry of the school year.

THE AMUSEMENTS OF GIRLS

MY DEAR HELEN: Tell me what a girl does when she does what she likes to do, and I will tell you what manner of girl she is. The question of the amusements most popular in the life of a people or in that of an individual is not a trivial, but a significant one. We take this for granted when we are discussing the Roman gladiatorial contests, the Spanish bull-fights, the English bear-baitings, the Olympian games, the Miracle Plays, or the Maypole Dances. But, when we come to consider the amusements of our own time, — the vaudeville, the yacht race, the football game, or the playing of whist, — we seem to think them of no importance in showing the trend of our civilisation. A people's amusements, however, are still a short and sure path to the judgment of their actual development. It will not be a waste of time if I try to describe for you the situation as I see it in regard to our pleasures in this twentieth century.

At present there are the most surprising extremes in the theories of people as to how, when, and where to amuse themselves. Greater and greater sums of money are spent

The AMUSEMENTS OF GIRLS

each year in the effort for pleasure. The voice of protest against the pursuit of pleasure as an occupation has been almost silenced; and yet, on the whole, perhaps there was never a time when less satisfaction was had out of the devices for diversion. It seems a little academic, but we really may be helped to understand this condition by remembering the history of recreation in the last three centuries. The Puritan idea of amusements was the reaction of sober people against the levity of the Stuarts. It went far. John Bunyan speaks in the same tone of bell-ringing, tipcat, and profane swearing as his three chief sins. In the England of his time there was little or no calm judgment of pleasure-seekers. The gentlemen were wicked, flippant, and worldly. They enjoyed hunting, dancing, card-playing, and play-acting: therefore, these amusements were bad. The Puritan hated bear-baiting, said Macaulay, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators. Now, when the Puritans came to America, these convictions were re-enforced by the stern necessities of the life of pioneers; and presently the charge that amusement was a waste of time was laid upon the already over-

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

burdened New England conscience. There was a special attack upon the fine arts, the theatre, painting, and sculpture; and all were laid under the ban.

It is difficult for us to picture the actual absence of recreation which existed even, for example, in the Salem in which Hawthorne was bred. Almost the only gatherings where people might greet each other, and where the ordinary social amenities might take place, were to be found in the Sunday worship and in the weekly prayer-meeting. The theatre, the ball, any athletic sports, were out of the question. The church sociable had not yet developed. The small tea-party was the only form of entertainment really in vogue among the religious. "Work was the sober law they knew well to obey." As lately as fifty years ago there were thousands of families in New England who might be called people of cultivation, and who forbade to their children the reading of any work of fiction. The recovery from this stern code has come but lately, and come, no doubt, partly from the liberalising of the Calvinistic view of life, as a vale of tears. Once started, the reaction set in with a rush. All sorts of influences served to help it on. The increase

The AMUSEMENTS OF GIRLS

of interest in the physical life of men and women invented many new amusements, and the rapid accumulation of fortunes increased the number of people who could give time to pleasure. The ban against the theatre was removed. The number of new diversions of the last twenty years is enormous. In my girlhood the mild and innocuous but delightful croquet was almost the only outdoor sport in which both men and women engaged. Now we have tennis, golf, hunting, coaching, yachting, the bicycle, and the automobile. Amusements, so called, are legion; and the class of people that devotes its life to them is rapidly increasing. It lives to play; and it is apparently regardless of the fact, patent enough to a thoughtful observer, that it is really playing at life.

I think I see two different influences which have gone to the determining of our recreations. Each of them has been potent in determining our way of life. Into many of our amusements the element of competition has been thrust. It has grown to enormous proportions. It is the life of much of our modern play. We no longer divert ourselves in order to have a good time, but in order to win in a contest. Examples can be cited almost without num-

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

ber. Witness the development of the game of whist within the past ten years. From having been a well-loved recreation to which might be given an evening a week, or at the most two evenings a week, by rational people, it has come to be the occupation literally of thousands of women and of hundreds of men. Its code of rules has been increased tenfold. Its concentrated strain is now even greater than that of chess. People flock to its great congresses and tournaments, and play night and day during the brief week of these sessions. To the mere spectator it seems amusement run mad. Again, it would appear that the pleasure of eating might be fairly free from the element of competition; but to-day there are hundreds of women's luncheon clubs scattered over the country where every guest is provided with a chafing-dish in which she may try to surpass her neighbour in the concoction of a toothsome viand. A variation of this custom is to be found in the meeting of the luncheon club at the houses of the members, where each luncheon is set in sharp competition with its direct predecessor or successor. Once more, all sorts of athletics have become competitive to the last degree. It has been interesting to

The AMUSEMENTS OF GIRLS

watch the development of our national game of baseball, especially when compared with the English game of cricket. Cricket is a slow game. More than half the balls bowled have no result upon the score. A constant change of position on the field gives chance for a breathing-spell to both players and spectators. Baseball, on the other hand, has developed into a game where the nervous tension of player and spectator never relaxes for an instant. Not a ball is pitched that does not count in the score. Every year produces a new set of rules, and always they tend to increase the difficulty and strenuousness of the game. From time immemorial a man's club has been supposed to be the place of amusement, of leisure, even of self-indulgence; but into the world of clubs have come the women's clubs, and, with the exceptions which one might count on one's fingers, these devote themselves, not to the increase of comfort or relaxation for their members, but to the increase of knowledge, of activity, and of eagerness. From the time of King David until the middle of the nineteenth century the dance has been a spontaneous expression of high spirits. It has been untrammelled

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

by any laws save those of grace and freedom. To-day the most popular form of the dance is the german, and into this has come as keen a competition as can exist, veiled by the conventionality of society. The avidity with which our young women desire to bear home their arms full of favours may well be called greediness. The increase in the cost of the favours at balls given by the very rich has multiplied this desire; and to-day the german has no more unalloyed spontaneity than the baseball game. The most that we ask of a girl in relation to it is that she shall play the game fairly, and that, if she loses, she shall keep a smiling face.

Finally, into this stressful world, where we are making such desperate efforts for diversion, at last has been imported the professional entertainer. The dinner party and the reception are incomplete without the presence of such a helper. An actress to recite, a professional musician to sing or play, a skilful dancer,—each commands large prices, and is taken as a matter of course at great entertainments. To sum up the whole situation, the most nervous folk in the world, living in the most strenuous age of the world, and

The AMUSEMENTS OF GIRLS

needing most that natural relief from effort which cheers and recreates, have contrived that their amusements shall be competitive to a degree unknown in any previous civilisation, and are rapidly losing the power of enjoying themselves in any hearty and spontaneous fashion. We pursue Pleasure more eagerly than ever, but we seldom come up with her. We are like William Watson's description of Byron : —

“Too avid of earth's bliss, he was of those
Whom Delight flies because they give her chase.
Only the odour of her wild hair blows
Back in their faces hungering for her face.”

Now it would be strange if there had been no rebellion against this state of things. A certain class of entertainments was sure to fall into the hands of reactionists, and to become more and more flippant, absurd, and empty. The theatre seems to have been the special ground of this movement. The vaudeville performance is the clearest evidence of the tendency. Thousands of people go to the theatres where these entertainments are given, and sit for hours witnessing a series of “turns,” where each is more stupid and silly than the last. Next

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

in vacuity to the vaudeville performance stands the modern farce-comedy. This, again, commands large audiences. It, in truth, is not strenuous. If it puts nothing of value into the mind, at least it does not call upon the weary man or woman to engage in a battle, as does whist or dancing. It would be amusing, if it were not pathetic, to see the number of cultivated people looking on at a performance that is beneath contempt, laughing at time-worn jokes, delighting in horse-play, and apparently believing themselves well amused by an entertainment which twenty-five years ago would have been thought too foolish even for children. By a seeming contradiction, which is but seeming, our amusements have grown physically and intellectually strenuous on the one side and vacuous and stupid on the other. In spite of the plethora of "amusements," no people ever reaped from so large an effort so slender a harvest. If one wants evidence of this, let one watch the expression on the faces, even of the young, when they are dancing, or at the theatre, when they are riding bicycles or driving automobiles. If the face tells anything, it tells a tale of ennui and of indif-

The AMUSEMENTS OF GIRLS

ference. The laugh has disappeared: the giggle and the smile remain, but fill poorly its place. Lowell puts the thing admirably:—

“Pleasure doos make us Yankees kind o’ winch,
Ez though ’twas sumthin’ paid for by the inch:
But yet we do contrive to worry thru,
Ef Dooty tells us that the thing’s to du ;
An’ kerry a hollerday, ef we set out
Ez stiddily ez tho’ ’twas a redoubt.”

The enormous increase of nervous diseases testifies to the want of recreation. It is high time that we looked about for remedies for an evil that is becoming a national one. Many of them will lie in the hands of young women.

My first remedy, then, is that of recalling Simplicity. She and her sweet sister Spontaneity have deserted modern society, and they must be coaxed back. This is a task for the subtle arts of women; but how difficult it is nobody knows that has not tried it. I say to myself, “I am too self-conscious.” Does that help me to become less so? Surely not. Still, a wholesome life, not too full of either work or play, a clear ideal, and a healthy body should somehow bring back simple and spontaneous

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

forms of recreation. The amusement shall not be arranged three weeks in advance nor even three hours in advance. It shall surprise us, and shall add the joy of the unexpected to its other pleasures. This must of course imply that it shall not be complicated, and shall not need the help of the professional. I suppose all amusement must finally fall back upon that fundamental pleasure which we take in the society of congenial fellow-beings. Competition has brought about a decay of social skill, shown in the failing of the art of conversation. Good talk is the queen of amusements. The intrusion of a professional elocutionist into a company of good talkers is little short of an insult. The ability to converse well is at the call of any young woman who will read widely, think a little on her own account, feel deeply, and learn a wholesome reverence for the language used by Shakespeare, Shelley, Lamb, Wordsworth, and Emerson. With three or four such young women in a company, a drawing-room may easily be a temple fit for the highest intellectual pleasure ever discovered. With the professional entertainer, such a room can only be a poorly arranged

The AMUSEMENTS OF GIRLS

theatre. Some of the most delightful evenings I have ever passed were spent in front of a great open fire, with a half-dozen congenial spirits; and we did nothing but talk. The person who should have suggested a game, even one of whist, would have been laughed out of court. The conversation was as much more stimulating and delightful than any game could be as a real, living man is more interesting than a mannikin. One of our first remedies, then, for our failing power to amuse ourselves is the cultivation of the art of conversation. If you complain that life with no more exciting amusement than conversation will have a tendency to dulness, I answer that this is only one of a score of pleasures, although it penetrates and irradiates them all.

Perhaps my next remedy shall be a revival of a calm, true love of nature. Our athletic advances have thrust themselves between us and nature's greatest charm. No thought of breaking records or of winning matches must intrude upon the silence of the nature-lover. Crawford's Notch should not remain in the mind as "the place where I took that ugly header." A man may really believe that he is learning to love the country when

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

he rushes through it in an electric car or on a bicycle; but of such a one I fear Wordsworth's scathing lines will remain true: —

“ A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.”

I watched the other day a middle-aged man and woman sitting on a beach upon which were rolling up great breakers, bearing the spent force of a storm far out at sea. They were not young lovers, but old friends. They talked or were silent, but their eyes seldom strayed from the beauty of colour and motion before them. They sat almost without moving for two long hours; and, when they finally rose, I chanced to overhear their expressions of regret that the time had been so short. I thought of the young woman who would have put into those two hours three afternoon teas and a whist lesson; and she compared but ill with these simple folk, on whom, I daresay, she would have looked with patronising condescension. Wordsworth probably will continue the high priest of the lover of nature, but there ought soon to come to his aid some acolytes who will understand and put into words the modern

The AMUSEMENTS OF GIRLS

passion for the union of the moods of nature with the moods of man. The earlier Hardy did this constantly in prose. Edward Rowland Sill began to do it in poetry. Miss Guiney sees some phases of it. But the poets that shall completely fill this modern need are yet to come.

So much for my belief that at least two of the old pleasures of society shall have revival. There must be many others, but they may not be prescribed to you by anybody in authority. If new amusements are to come, they must come in the natural course of events. But I doubt if it is so much new amusements that we want, or even a return to old amusements, as a new spirit which shall penetrate and take possession of all this region of our life. Competition may be the life of trade, but it is the death of recreation. Men and women alike, we are daily contestants in the arena. The precise task of recreation is to call us away from this contest. It should give us ease, delight, a free heart, and a light foot. The desire to excel others has no place in the hours we give to amusement. The great attempt to be first in applied science may give us the messenger of the gods to attend our door and run our

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

errands; but it cannot give us one hearty laugh or the one healthful moment of happiness which the laugh would bring. We must find a more excellent way than the road of emulation. Who knows but it may be an old, old way? What if there should come a time when a girl's measure of the fun she had at a german should not be found in the favours she had won, but in the favours she had done! What if a game of football should be played in an Elysian field, where a manly self-control and a love of the game were the main issues and victory the minor one! What if a dinner might be enjoyed, even if it had no guest capable of reciting anything when the coffee was brought in! What if the giver of a girls' luncheon should take no account of the number of courses at the last luncheon! What if the theatre should cease to advertise plays produced regardless of cost, and should give weary people a taste of the true recreation of heart and mind alike! This will be nothing more than the coming to pass of the prophecy: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom."

CRITICISM OF THE THEATRE

CRITICISM OF THE THEATRE

MY DEAR MARGARET: I am greatly interested in what you say of your pleasure in the performance at the German Theatre in New York. The manager of that theatre is undoubtedly aiding, more than any other man in the United States, to keep alive the good traditions of the stage, and to cultivate popular taste for noble dramatic work. I think it is a good time, just after you have witnessed one of his productions, for me to have out with you the old argument which I remember we left unfinished, whether a cultivated taste enhances one's pleasure in plays. I know many a school-girl insists that she does not wish to lose her first childish enthusiasm for any performance on the stage. She loves to laugh and cry over the fortunes of folk behind the footlights; and she insists that to say that a very handsome actor acts badly, and that a play finely costumed and put on the stage and well mounted is a poor play, is all intended to dampen the ardour of youth, and to spoil her pleasure in what seems to her the most exciting amusement the city has to offer. Would she not rather keep her uncritical delight, and leave to older

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

and colder folk the pleasure of doing what she calls "picking everything to pieces," and slowly robbing her of her delusions in respect to the stage? Now the question should sound absurd, but it does not. If you will think, however, for a moment, of the analogy between this and any of the other pleasures of life, I think you will acknowledge that you have not much ground to stand upon. What, for example, of a cultivated taste in eating? Would you wish to go back to the childish days when bread and syrup seemed to you the most delicious food in the world? Is not your real enjoyment in a dainty and exquisitely served dinner of a far higher type than that which you used to get out of your childish picnics in the summer-house? The truth is that there is no comparison to be made between the pleasures of a cultivated taste and those of an uncultivated taste; and the ignorant peasant that gulps down the contents of his dinner-pail is no more equal in enjoyment to the connoisseur who delights in the triumph of the French chef than is the man who accepts the modern farce-comedy as a finished work of art to be compared to the man who has learned his theatrical criticism in the good school of the *Théâtre Français*.

CRITICISM OF THE THEATRE

I will tell you what I think are the fundamental truths of criticism which you should know and learn how to apply in order to get the highest pleasure out of the theatre. In the first place, you must separate in your thought the setting of the play from the substance of it. The setting is, after all, only the frame of the picture. It is possible for the frame to be much too elaborate, and to withdraw attention from the picture itself. I remember hearing a wise old actress say to a group of enthusiastic young folk: "I regret to hear that Sir Henry Irving is about to spend forty thousand pounds on the production of Shakespeare's *Henry the Eighth*. I fear that we are in danger of forgetting that with Shakespeare the text is the one consideration." Now it is, after all, true that with modern play-writers, as with Shakespeare, the text is really the one lasting consideration. The secondary considerations are the scenery, the lighting of the stage, the costumes, and even the person of the actors. It is well to remind the young girl of the period that a handsome actor, with a fine figure and a graceful carriage, need not necessarily exhibit intelligence or give a real and substantial impersonation of a character.

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

Some evenings of the highest pleasure that I remember were spent in witnessing plays which were poorly set, according to our modern standards, but where the force and imagination of the acting carried us away into a realm far above the footlights. I wonder if you know Austin Dobson's delightful rondeau, *When Burbage Played?* It is worth memorising, as having in it the foundation of all this first principle of criticism which is so important : —

“ When Burbage played, the stage was bare
Of fount and temple, tower and stair ;
Two backswords eked a battle out ;
Two supers made a rabble rout ;
The throne of Denmark was a chair !

“ And yet, no less, the audience there
Thrilled through all changes of Despair,
Hope, Anger, Fear, Delight, and Doubt,
When Burbage played !

“ This is the actor's gift, to share
All moods, all passions, nor to care
One whit for scene, so he without
Can lead men's minds the roundabout,
Stirred as of old those hearers were,
When Burbage played ! ”

In the second place, the character of the play should be discovered early and clearly

CRITICISM OF THE THEATRE

recognised. It is not permitted to the artist to shift his point of view continually. He is bound at the beginning to determine what he is going to see and where he is going to stand to see it. Then he takes us to his chosen spot, and keeps us there until the curtain is rung down. There are at least five different aspects under which the dramatist may record human life,—the tragic, the comic, the melodramatic, the farcical, and the burlesque. Each of these aspects presents itself in a given kind of play. We distinguish easily enough between tragedy and comedy, and so do most play-writers. The distinction between melodrama, comedy, and farce, is not, however, so easy to follow, and is constantly ignored. Time and again, in the course of a winter, you will see on a programme the compound word "farce-comedy," as if it were a legitimate kind of dramatic composition. It is not. The prevalence of the farce-comedy on our stage marks the decline of good taste. A comedy undertakes to show life as it is, with the emphasis put upon the amusing side of social foibles or weaknesses. They are depicted in such a way as to make us laugh, but in such a way also as to make us believe in

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

them. When Shakespeare, for example, makes Beatrice a scold and Benedict a woman-hater, we know exactly what he is going to bring about; namely, the filing and sweetening of the shrewish tongue, and the overthrow of the self-sufficient man by the passion of love. Each of the characters is developed exactly in the line of truth. When a farce, however, is composed, it is avowedly an exaggeration. In it everything that is funny in real life is touched up until it is still funnier on the stage. Once we have accepted that view, we may enjoy the situation hugely; but to be dragged from one position to the other is most distressing. I remember seeing a play which had in it many of the elements of a delightful comedy. One of the characters in it, however, was an ill-trained housemaid. That wretched housemaid dominated the stage with a ragged gown, a huge and violently used feather duster, a shrieking voice, and manners which permitted her to jump over a table or crawl under a piano in the presence of guests. Just as I was about to laugh at some clever and human turn of the comedy, in came the whirlwind of farce to spoil my laugh and reduce it to irritation and disgust. Until we get a public

CRITICISM OF THE THEATRE

sufficiently trained in criticism to know that a farce and a comedy must not be mixed up together, though either of them is good by itself, we cannot hope much for the progress of the modern stage. While I am talking about the different kinds of plays, it is well, perhaps, to say that the melodrama, as such, is legitimate enough. It has in it several elements of sensationalism, and it is always romantic; but, kept free from the characteristics of other kinds of plays, it may well serve an excellent purpose on the stage. Perhaps the one fault into which the writer of melodrama most easily falls is that the villany of the villain becomes too deeply dyed. Mr. William Gillette wrote a capital melodrama in *Secret Service*. Through that, to be sure, a villain stalked; but he was one in whom we could easily believe, and whose counterpart, in fact, was no doubt one of the products of the Civil War. But, when Mr. Gillette came to construct a play from the *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, he steeped his hands deep in crime and dyed them with gore. An ordinary villain was not enough for him; but he must concoct a syndicate for theft which dominated a whole city, and carried on its operations on a scale beyond the

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

wildest power of imagination to credit. The melodrama became absurd, and not even Mr. Gillette's refined and artistic method will save it from its predestined fate.

Every dramatic production, then, should bear a certain definite relation to real life,—not photographic, but like that which the portrait painted by an artist bears to his subject. The dramatist must have the power to combine, to unite, to surprise, in such a way that he shall produce a play at once interesting and lifelike. There must not seem to be anything haphazard about the drama, nor must its structure be too evident. There must be no striving after the effect of the moment, but all must be brought to work together to the final unity. No temptation is more fatal than that to make a stage point at the expense of verisimilitude. Mr. George Grossmith hit off an American tendency in this respect when he parodied the domestic melodrama where “the farm hands have a tendency to line up and sing male quartettes on the smallest provocation.”

Closely allied to this power of construction is that of speech and natural dialogue. People should talk on the stage so that it shall seem as if they were speaking in real life,—not

CRITICISM OF THE THEATRE

with long-drawn-out and portentous speeches, not, on the other hand, with conversations so witty and sparkling as to suggest the hand of the artisan. Conversation should flow in a lucid, limpid, pleasant, vigorous stream, in which nothing should be too much or too little, but all in perfect harmony with character and part.

When it comes to the matter of characterisation, there are certain well-known laws to be observed. Moral transformations must be made, if at all, with judicious caution. Men and women are not actually converted in the course of a play from sinners to saints. The total downfall of the virtuous is still less probable. The dramatist must know human nature, and have the skill to transfer it from the world to the stage. He must be able to make the distant near and the foreign familiar. He must infuse life into mere pictures. He must have the constructive power which brings order out of chaos. He must be able to show that the triumph of justice and the punishment of sin are inevitable. We must say as the curtain goes down: "Yes, of course. Thus it must have been." The actors must seem to have worked out their own sweet wills, though, in fact, the

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

dramatist has dominated the play and has made it after a pattern shown him by his own creative imagination. After this high fashion Shakespeare must have wrought. The most modest play-writer may adopt the method, even when he works with slight materials. I am not insisting that you should take Shakespeare for a standard, and demand of every modern dramatist a dramatic and poetic production like his, but only that you should refuse to find pleasure in a poor, cheap, tawdry mongrel which passes itself off for modern society drama. When you have once learned to distinguish between the first-best, the second-best, and the third-best, you will discover that your pleasure in the first-best has been trebled; and you will be ready to array yourself by the side of those who are willing to do battle for a more artistic and more perfect modern drama.

CIVIC OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

MY DEAR MARGARET : It has often seemed in the last twenty-five years as if all the duties in the world had been assigned to

CIVIC OPPORTUNITY

women, and most of them to the unfortunate graduates of colleges. The stronger sex have grown cautious about bringing into this modern world, as into the custom-house, any theories to which duties were attached; but women have been telling themselves, and men—especially at college commencements—have told them, of the seriousness of life, of the need of work along the old lines and of farther effort in new directions toward the betterment of the world. This teaching has grown more insistent each year. It has notably lacked the quality of humour. Men have continued to laugh, even when they have assembled to discuss grave problems of government or of philanthropy. But women have accepted one dictum after another with unyielding gravity, until the situation has become solemn to the point of being ludicrous. The stern "You ought" has two-thirds supplanted the inviting, "Wouldn't you like?" and altogether crowded out the refreshing New Englandism "Shouldn't you admire to?" Considering all this, she must be a brave woman who would lift up her voice in a plea for more services at the hands of women. But I am convinced of my case; and necessity is laid upon me to write to you

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

to-day about your duties in civic life,—the State, the town, the village, and their righteous demands upon you. I wish to talk of facts as they are, not of golden opportunity to come in some future when things shall be other than they now are. The twentieth century is before us; and you and thousands of other girls are going to meet, not the roseate conditions of some Utopia, but the plain facts of life in Worcester and Chicago and Newton and Cleveland and Boston.

The inquiry as to these new duties is legitimate, not simply because of the enlargement of the career of women, but chiefly because of the change in social conditions. This change has affected all members of the community alike. If a distinction must be made, it is probably true that the lives of men have been more altered than those of women. So slowly has come the increase of life in large communities that we scarcely realise it. It is but a few years since the first cry of "abandoned farms" met our ears. It will soon be followed by the cry of "abandoned villages." The census shows that a large city increases in population at a percentage nearly double that of the small city. Once I could walk about the streets of a good-

CIVIC OPPORTUNITY

sized town and meet but two beggars in a year. Now in Boston I meet a half-dozen a day. Once I could be sure that ninety-eight out of every one hundred men and women wanted the best schools for their children, and were tolerably agreed as to what constituted the best school. Now I see party arrayed against party in the conduct of the public schools,—not, as in the earlier time, because one man thought all boys should be taught Latin, and another thought the knowledge of that tongue should be restricted to the lads that were to become clergymen, but because one faction of the school board is composed of those that vote the Democratic ticket, and the other faction of those that vote the Republican ticket. Once I fed and housed the woman who made my undergarments, my gowns, and even the clothing of the masculine part of the household. I knew perfectly the conditions under which she worked. Now I may buy, in a clean, sunny shop, garments that have been made in a room into which no ray of sunshine has ever penetrated, and where poverty, hunger, disease, furnish the motive power to drive the sewing-machine. These conditions of life in cities are new in the

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

United States, and we have by no means learned how to cope with them. I think that, for the solution of many problems which they suggest, the world waits for woman's contriving brain and efficient hand. In four separate departments of civic life I discover convincing call for a service comparatively new, and which women alone can hope to render satisfactorily. Let us come to the definite consideration of these departments.

No one that has watched the life of city and town since the Civil War but knows that a process has been going on which we may call vulgarisation. It has arisen out of the ordinary conditions of bread-and-butter getting. Often at the bottom of it has lain a noble and chivalrous impulse. If the man has desired and built an elevated railway to take him to his desk earlier in the morning, it must be remembered that he may also have desired to get to his hearth earlier at night. The desire for public amusements within the reach of the working people has been a laudable one; but the cheapening of the seats in the theatre has gone on even less rapidly than the cheapening of the performance upon the stage. The cultivation of a taste for poetry is noble; but, when five thousand school chil-

CIVIC OPPORTUNITY

dren recite in concert Browning's poem of *Evelyn Hope*, it is plain that public taste is not really raised. It may be a good investment to paint advertisements of soap over all the face of the Palisades of the Hudson River; it may be good business policy to fill the shop windows at Christmas with representations of the most sacred scene in human history,—the whole constructed out of "small wares," by devices as ingenious as they are sacrilegious. For good reason or bad, however, the process has gone on; and the hideous results are here. High buildings, elevated railways, landscapes blotted by advertisements, statues which are caricatures of fame,—these all testify to the need of a great courageous force which shall create taste true and sweet, and which shall recognise the real part that beauty must play in life. Plato's words in *The Republic* are perennially fresh, and have the very root of the matter in them:—

"Then [in the coming city] will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason."

Every woman is bound to respond to the cry for help which comes up to-day from every city and town of our large country, "Save me my beauty!" If the cry is to be answered to any purpose, it must be done at once. Women have already demonstrated their sensitiveness to the plea. The monuments to their good service are many of them visible only to the mind's eye, but we that live in Boston may dare encourage the women of other cities to heed the appeal of frightened beauty elsewhere. We lift our eyes to see a guardian angel — a woman's figure — floating over our own Bulfinch State House, another over our annually rescued Common, and another poised just ninety feet above the street, and guarding the beauty of Copley Square.

The day should come soon when we shall not be forced to spend two-thirds of our energy in the conservation of the beauty which still remains, but may address ourselves to the increase of civic charm. Parks, fitting architecture, school-room decoration creating a public taste for noble sculpture,—all these must come in due time. You should live to

CIVIC OPPORTUNITY

see the day when it will not be absurd to reverse the familiar couplet to read: —

I slept and dreamed that Life was Duty,
I woke and found that Life was Beauty.

But this is only the beginning of the task for the educated woman. It may seem a long step, but it is really a short one from park, statue, and noble building to the rooms where the little children of our nation are being educated. To the problem of public education our cities positively demand that their women shall address themselves. Never has the educational system in our country been so tangled. It were impossible for me to give in detail the difficulties which beset it, but from the census I have gleaned one little fact which is enough to set us thinking. Whenever I persuade myself for a moment that education is so winning that it must commend itself to the children, into whose hands presently the fate of our beloved country will fall, this dark and terrifying fact turns the future gloomy. Taking the United States together, one-quarter of our children — and only one-quarter — get into our grammar schools: three-quarters of them have only the education given in primary schools. How

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

few of the fortunate quarter ever attain the high school may be guessed, since in the city of Boston ten high schools suffice for the needs of fifty-six grammar schools. Public education we may have: popular education we have not. The problem of the situation is more serious than we yet dream. I shall propose no solution; but I see three clear duties which we women owe to our civic life, and which we may set about performing to-morrow morning.

It should be an absurdity to say in this century what is, on the whole, the most vital thing to be said about public education to-day. It must be taken out of politics. The more a man tries to get education out of politics, the farther, apparently, it sinks in. By virtue of his exercise of the suffrage, every man is a politician; but there is a force outside of the arena of political life far more potent than secret caucuses or barrels of funds. This force is continually controlled by women, and it is as elusive as it is powerful. It is called "Public Opinion." Once enlist that whole force to-day against politics in the school board and the school-house, and the victory is won.

Here is the second duty which lies in our

CIVIC OPPORTUNITY

path,—a work for which one wise woman is better than ten wise men. She will know, what apparently men have not yet learned, that with children even more truly than with other people the personality of the teacher is the chief matter. Learning, a position, a famous name, the magnetism of a great institution, the wish to secure the social advantages of education,—all these may avail with you and me now; but with the child only one thing avails,—the personal charm of the teacher. Some day make a tour of twenty school-rooms, in each of which fifty children are ruled by one woman, and tell me in how many of them you find Charm enthroned. If I must choose for my primary school-teacher between high scholarship and a sympathetic heart and personal charm, I shall make a decision which will be disappointing to a board of examiners. If our schools are to do their work for little children, first of all the teacher must be loved. After that, it is all the better if she be highly educated.

It is not alone to Beauty and to Education that we are called. Philanthropy has a new need for us. Philanthropy in its effectiveness and method is an exact gauge of the

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

advancement of the community. The town or the nation that supports beggars, permits disease-breeding slums, neglects hospitals, allies itself with mediævalism, and signs its own doom. In no other department of life has more change taken place in the last score of years. No doubt it was imperative fifty years ago that Philanthropy should be extricated from the generous, impulsive, indiscriminating, unforeseeing hands of women; but you and I know that it is impossible for any human institution to contain all the wisdom there is about human needs, unless it is enriched and supplemented by human personality. No doubt the cry was, and is, a noble one,—“Not alms, but a friend”; but that cry must not change into “Not alms, but an association.” Women have more power than men to give themselves to those who need, and it remains profoundly true that

“Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me.”

I think also they have more keenness in detecting spurious claims; but everywhere in modern philanthropy the touch of woman's hand is now needed, to save charity from going too far in the direction of merely mechanical, perfunctory help.

CIVIC OPPORTUNITY

Again I see an opportunity for women to serve in the present strife between employer and employed. The only programme ever devised by a man or a body of men for bettering social conditions among working men and women is that employer and employed shall begin to be better men and women. Christianity speaks in daily crescendo its message of neighbourliness. While we are looking for a social revolution which will bring in the hoped-for millenium, we may easily neglect the simple method that knocks at our bedroom door to-morrow morning. The very fact that women are just outside the storm-centre in the industrial world makes them all the better qualified for the task of dealing with the crisis.

In the modern community there are many forces at work which are socialistic. These tend to the repression of individualistic effort when that becomes oppressive. They check competition when it is cruel, and they stop the elevation of wealth and power to lordship over a degraded and unrecognised mass of what we call "working-men." On the other hand there is at work in society the mighty power of a righteous

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

individualism. It encourages effort, develops originality, rewards genius. It preaches the perennial gospel of noble leadership. The union of these two conflicting forces, the balanced recognition that each is essential to social progress, depends chiefly upon women. A man becomes, by virtue of his occupation or his opinions, committed to the one or the other. The priest is almost invariably socialistic. The manufacturer dreads and distrusts socialism. The musician reads *Looking Backward* as if it were the dream of a madman; the politician believes it a dangerous element in a wide-spread discontent; while the man at the spinning-jack, or bending over his whirling stone in a glass factory, or risking his life in the year-long night of the mine, reads the romance, and rests upon it as the charm which shall set free his son or his son's son. But in the future, as in the past, society will progress by the equalisation of the forces of the social surrender of the individual and the social exaltation of the individual. There is only one great class in the community set apart in a place to know and to direct this equalisation. That class is women, and that work waits for their wise and capable hands.

CIVIC OPPORTUNITY

I should be foolish to think that I had really put into words the numberless calls which civic life makes upon women because they are women. I have tried to make you hear the loudest voices only as they have come to my ears. Beauty, education, philanthropy,—these wait for words which your lips may speak, for help which your hands may give, and for love which shall come from your heart of heart. As I re-survey the whole ground of the question, it dawns upon me that my first plea should be the last one, too. From all time, women have been set in the world as the priestesses of beauty. Education, philanthropy, the relation of man to man, are becoming un-beautiful, and that because they are losing the touch of personality. The thronging life of the city is largely responsible for this loss. The country is the background against which is set the youth of most of us elder folk. Its springs quickened our dreams with their miracles of beauty and blossom; its autumns dropped their rainbow leaves upon the delicious sadness of youth. We came of a sudden in May upon the blossoming red cedar, "all dipped in sunshine like a poet," we surprised the blueness of the shadows on the

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

snow in some freezing January day, we caught the song of the hermit-thrush in the shyest nook in the wood, and we lived under the sway of mountains which told a perennial story of power and beauty. The Garden of Eden set itself about the childhood of any boy or girl so born; and, though the Tree of Knowledge grew there, it was no longer forbidden or poisonous fruit, since it had been grafted with eternal love.

For the generations to come there is to be a far different background. Suddenly the fields and the river, the lake and the mountain, have been swept backward, as the great scene-shifter Time has hurried on the drama of human life. The shop, the street filled with eager, weary human faces, the factories swarming with "hands," the electric car pushing its way outward into such spaces as yet remain unpeopled, the market, the hospital, the poorhouse, the great library, the jail, the gymnasium, the stock exchange,—these write their record upon the thought and the life of the child. When you and I want refreshment from the struggle and the dust of these same streets, we turn to the picture which makes our childhood's background.

CIVIC OPPORTUNITY

The children of our time, and the time to come, will not have that source of joy.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways.”

God first planted a garden. But modern life brings to pass the dream of the seer of Patmos, and the bride of the future is a city. To us it belongs to determine whether it shall be a city reeking with “the weariness, the fever, and the fret” of human life, hideous to eye, ear, and smell, a place where beauty is laughed at as mere sentiment, where little children hate learning, where charity makes bare sins under pretence of covering them, where labour is done by “hands” and paid by reluctant dollars, where the scorn of the poor for the rich is exceeded only by the scorn of the rich for the poor, where womanhood ceases to stand for love, and stands for display and vulgarity; or whether we shall find, and that speedily, the secret which shall make brick walls and pavements transform themselves into streets of “pure gold, as it were transparent glass,” and the mass of faces slowly change into those of an innumerable throng who “shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more”;

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

where injustice shall cower far away from "the city that lieth four-square," "the length and the breadth and the height of it equal," and "where there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." "Blessed are they who so learn His commandments" in this present world "that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates" into such a City.

THE SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN

MY DEAR MARGARET: I made a shrewd guess that I should have a letter from you, asking me to set in order the arguments in regard to the exercise of the suffrage by women, when I saw in a newspaper the other day that a movement was on foot in your State to introduce an amendment to the Constitution, providing for such suffrage. I am glad to write you my views on the question, though I think I should tell you frankly that I know but six women in the world whose opinions, once formed, have been changed on this momen-

tous subject ; and I am one of the six. When I was a girl in college, it was taken for granted by most of us that the suffrage was one of the coming facts for women,—as certain as the Baccalaureate degree or that of Doctor of Philosophy. Most of the women under whom we worked in college, notably Maria Mitchell, were ardently in favour of suffrage for women ; and I saw no reason to question their position. Ten years after leaving college, however, I found it necessary to give reasons for the faith that was in me. Accordingly, I reviewed the whole situation, and studied, as far as possible, the history of the suffrage among English-speaking people. I readily found that conclusions which I had taken as a matter of course were open to grave doubt, and after much thought I arrived at the theory which I am now going to set forth for you.

In the first place, before we can know whether the suffrage is desirable for women, we must try to find out what it is. There has been so much careless talk about it that it is really difficult to define it. The common phrase, “the right of suffrage,” is responsible for a great deal of misconception. The suffrage, as exercised by men anywhere

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

in the world to-day, is not a right nor a privilege, nor is it even always a duty. It is a contrivance for the administration of a more or less democratic form of government. It is just as truly a contrivance as the appointment of a committee, for example, by an assembly which wishes a piece of work done more quickly and accurately than it could be done if it were left to the whole gathering. Granting this contrivance, undoubtedly the ideal government would be one brought into existence by the votes of the wisest and best persons in the country, and without the votes of base, ignorant, and venal persons. For the sake of argument, I am willing to concede that, if such scheme were possible, it would not much matter if the suffrage were exercised by each of the sexes. In fact, I have not decided whether, in the abstract, the exercise of the suffrage would be good or bad for women. Women are wonderfully adaptable, and would perhaps work out successfully the problems which suffrage would thrust into their lives, as they have worked out thousands of other problems. The theory that force must reside behind a vote, and that the duties of wifehood and motherhood would prevent this in the case of women, has been presented

many times, and I know is regarded by many people as the soundest argument against the suffrage. For my own part, I have not crossed that bridge, since we have not come to it. Another and different obstacle looms up so much closer to us that I have not deemed it necessary to make up my mind as to how the more remote one should be dealt with. No "horizontal division" for the suffrage could be made without beginning the whole matter over again, and that seems impossible under our present Constitution.

Apart, then, from the effect of the suffrage upon women, or from the possibility of revising the whole system of suffrage in order to raise the standard of education and ability as a test for the vote, we come to the practical question of what would be the effect upon the country if women were now permitted to vote. The United States is to-day in grave peril from too wide an extension of the franchise. The corruption of our great cities is chiefly the result of a mass of ignorant voters. The wild heresies, financial and social, which sweep over our country every few years find their force and danger among the ignorant. You must remember that the question is not whether you and I are better

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

fitted to vote than the man that loafs on the benches of Boston Common or that shovels sand on a Western railway or breaks stones in the South. The question is whether he is better fitted to vote than his wife and his daughter, or rather whether we shall remedy the evil of his vote by adding to it that of his wife and his daughter.

The truth is that in what, for want of a better phrase, we must call the lower ranks of society, the average political intelligence of women is far below that of men. It is easy to say that this is due to the fact that women have not been brought to acquire knowledge of politics, since they have had no voice in them. I doubt if this is true. The difference seems to me to be a fundamental intellectual one,—a method of thought rather than a lack of thought. Even granting that it be not so, however, it is obvious that it would take at least two generations to cure the evil. To instruct a whole sex in its political duties would be a gigantic task, even in times of safety. To-day we are not safe. When a government is avowedly in grave danger because of the ignorant ballot, it would seem the greatest folly to try to cure the disease by doubling the ignorant ballot.

I cannot imagine any more dangerous step for the welfare of a great city, like that of New York, for example, than to put the ballot into the hands of women. It would be to quadruple the pernicious influences which might be used to corrupt it.

But you will say, "Should women be shut out from their share in the great public questions which form the keenest interest of our modern life?" Certainly not. In my opinion, women may be pretty fairly divided into two classes, the women who are too ignorant for the suffrage and the women who are too good to spend themselves on it. The truth is that suffrage is not all of modern political and civic life, nor, indeed, an overwhelming share of it. In our modern society the need is enormous of a class of persons who shall deal with great public questions without prejudice. The making of public opinion is the task of women, and in it they are pre-eminently successful. Education, the problems of municipal life, the questions of wages and hours both for women and men,—all these are matters which can be enormously influenced by the power wielded in the drawing-room, the women's club, the school. When we get into the detail of these ques-

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

tions, we come to matters trivial, personal, wearisome. Anybody can do that work. Women are fitted for something better. I have said a hundred times that the whole argument for and against giving the suffrage to women was summed up by the witty judge who, being asked to propose a toast at a woman's suffrage dinner in Colorado, offered this: "To women,—once our superiors, now our equals."

I don't like very well to talk about getting down into the world of politics, for undoubtedly politics ought to reside on a high plane; but the fact remains that, things being as they are, the phrase is accurate. I can but believe that the small experience we have had with the suffrage for women proves that the danger is no fancied one. In Utah two years ago the votes of women elected a polygamist,—a well-known violator of the most sacred law of the home. It is not difficult by certain processes to destroy standards of womanly refinement and womanly justice. When Theodore Roosevelt encountered a mob at Victor, Colorado, one of the leaders of the mob was a woman. She threw a stone which came very near the head of the Vice-president elect. Next day the local news-

The SUFFRAGE

paper had a leading article on the unfortunate occurrence, and, in commenting on the make-up of the crowd, mentioned this woman, said she undoubtedly was a dissolute creature and probably half drunk at the time, and added that it was to be hoped the incident would not be used as an argument against equal suffrage. The next morning after the publication a man rushed into the editor's office, knocked him off his editorial stool, and, after having given him a black eye, stood over him threateningly and exclaimed, "I want you to understand that that woman is my wife, and she is a perfect lady!" Now it would seem as if the standards had become a little confused in Colorado, until there was some uncertainty as to what constitutes "a perfect lady," and as if the whole story might indeed contain a moral.

No doubt it may sometimes be argued that the suffrage for women has worked well in educational matters, and that, where they have been given votes and offices in the school board, education has been the gainer. I think this may be true, in small towns and country places; but in large cities I am sure it is not true. I fear it is undeniable that the school board of many a city has

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

seen its feminine members guilty of wire-pulling, favouritism, and corruption which even the ward politician could scarcely match.

There are a hundred ways of utilising the force residing in the woman of intelligence and of leisure, for the betterment of our civic life. Some of these ways I mean to tell you about, but that shall be another story.

Meantime, I think you are safe on the conservative side of the question. You must be prepared to hear a good deal of railing at your position, and many charges that you are out of the line of progress. Let none of these things move you. The loudest shriekers are not necessarily the deepest thinkers. Whoever claims that women are to-day down-trodden proves by that claim how shallow is her knowledge of social conditions. Duties as legislators, police officers, sheriffs, and even as voters, I am content to leave for the time to men. None the less, I hope much for women's influence in the betterment of civic life.

FRIENDSHIPS FOR WOMEN

FRIENDSHIPS FOR WOMEN

MY DEAR HELEN: A week from to-day you will be having your first experience of a boarding-school. Here is my little preparatory sermon. Your teachers, both in the high school and in the school to which you are going, will hammer away on the importance of your getting good training and good equipment. Let me tell you that there is still a third object which you must not ignore. You must learn in a new and deeper sense the joys, privileges, duties, even the sorrows of friendship. Whatever other mistake you may make in a choice of friends, at least do not let it be a hasty one. I know it is a hard saying, but again and again a girl at school picks out her particular friend within two hours after she sees her, and in two weeks they have sworn each other allegiance. Fortunately, this does not always work so badly as one would expect, but often it does come out unfortunately for one or both of the young women; and, it seems to me, one can never have the highest satisfaction in a friendship so made. One is ashamed of being cheated in a gown because one chose it too hastily or in a poor light.

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

Why not ashamed still more of being cheated in a friend?

Another word about the beginning of friendship. Friendship differs from what we call "love" in its character, its variety, and its greater freedom from jealousy. Society is organised on the scheme that each woman shall have one lover, but may have many friends. I think, myself, too few friends almost as undesirable as too many, and too many as too few. The many-sided girl needs a larger circle of friends than the girl of extremely simple nature. Not too many to know well, and not too few, lest one becomes exacting!

If there is any one test sufficient to determine whether a given relation is to ripen into a friendship, it is perhaps this: does there exist an entire confidence between the two, together with that indefinable drawing to each other's society for which we have no name? Either of these without the other is a poor makeshift for the real thing. Many and many a school-girl has mistaken this indefinable magnetism which some one has for her for the devotion called friendship. Without a more substantial foundation it is sure soon to wear out. The memory of

FRIENDSHIPS FOR WOMEN

such a failure is likely to be a sore one for a lifetime. In other words, there must be a real congeniality, as well as a certain fascination, when friendship is to be great and lasting. This congeniality must not be founded on a similarity of weaknesses if it is to be a healthy friendship, but on a similarity of aspirations. I remember one particularly ill-advised association between two girls, which ended disastrously. I asked one of them why she had picked out the other as a friend, since she seemed particularly unsuitable, and she replied, "Oh, well, we were each of us always ready for anything." You could scarcely find a flimsier reason for a friendship. The girl that is always ready to help on her friend in mischief is a poor friend. I do not say that I want you to select a prig as your chosen ally for the first year of your school life. I insist only that the correspondence of the two natures shall be of the higher and not of the lower qualities.

Again, friendship must not be so absorbing as to destroy your sense of the proportion of things. You must see more than one girl in your horizon: you must see something besides the delights of conversation and of

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

intimacy, in the seven days of the week. A good test of the healthfulness of a friendship may be found in the question as to whether the two friends waste each other's time. Of course, I do not mean that you are never to have the pleasure of leisure together. Years hence you will recall not only the pleasant rivalries of the class-room or the athletic contest, but the long twilight talks in a window-seat, in which life grew and thrived; but that this should be the only business in which one feels a real interest is absurd. A friendship which wastes time presently begins to waste itself; and, before you know it, all its charm will have vanished.

Again, a real friendship must be truth-telling: it must hate the sweet flattery which it is so easy to give and so tempting to take. Oh, the flattery of girls,—how toothsome it is, and how dangerous! Do not consider yourself called upon to tell your friend all the disagreeable truths that may come to your mind. Sometimes friendship seems to imply a certain brutality degrading to both friends. Delicacy and sensitiveness should be the very structure of the girlish mind: they must not be broken. To tell lies to one's friend for the sake of being pleasant is a wrong. On

FRIENDSHIPS FOR WOMEN

the other hand, friendship has its own fine reticence, and does not talk too much about its ardours or its pains. It does not take advantage of its freedom to make confidences until they become wearisome. It must be self-denying, but wisely so.

In our modern life I think it is pretty well settled that a genuine relation between women must be active, not passive, on the part of both friends. The French have a proverb, long passing for truth, that in love one always offers the embrace, while the other presents the cheek. I think it a cynical and hateful belief, and I am sure it is not founded on fact. The most substantial relations I have ever known between women have been by no means those of the oak and ivy description. There has been a reciprocity, a partnership, a give and take, which have justified themselves in the eyes of the world. It is not self-respecting to be always sitting on a footstool at the feet of one's friend. If there is a girl who wants you always there, let her get on without you; and, on the other hand, do not accept a doglike devotion from any one, least of all from a girl younger than yourself.

ABOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS

My ideal friendship must be impregably on the side of right, against whatever temptation of impulse. That I am permitted to be a friend of a fine woman is a kind of pledge of loyalty to the highest. In a partnership one partner may well be held to a stern virtue by the thought that any lapse from it will involve the name and honour of the firm. So in all human relations. Friendship is a series of concessions in respect to unimportant questions, but it must never concede when it comes to the weightier matters of life. My friend may be a refuge and a protection in temptation, but she must not be an apologist for me if I have fallen.

So much for the tests to be applied to friendship. About its joys it is not so necessary to speak. I like to believe that you will find them all out for yourself. Unlike most pleasures it is heightened by the passing of the years, and rightly so. It reveals to us as nothing else can the nobility of human nature. Of course, it will have its stress and struggles; but they will pass. From its road, as from a mountain path, one catches the closest vision permitted to mortals of the divine nature which resides in the breast of every man and woman. In its noblest form

FRIENDSHIPS FOR WOMEN

it is the constant pledge and reflection of that Divine Friendship which alone saves and glorifies our human life.

III. About Personal Conduct

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

MY DEAR HELEN : I have been expecting, in some form or other, the question, Is life worth living? It seldom comes now in exactly the bald form in which Mr. Mallock put it; but, in one shape or another, it presents itself to every young and thoughtful woman. Is philanthropy worth while? Is society irredeemably flippant? Is religion a set of formulas? Is love a passing gratification of vanity or of the senses? These are some of the rôles in which intellectual discouragement masquerades.

Mallock's question seems one that only Mephistopheles could have invented; but, once abroad, it makes its way with the persistence of all malignant germs. It hardens, it cripples, it paralyses. Sometimes it seems to me good that we should meet it in youth, for youth's very buoyancy helps to save us from its evil influence. We think of it as a modern question; and yet it is as old as King Solomon, with his "All is vanity, saith the preacher." There is a remedy: there is an answer to Solomon's, doubt as to Mephistopheles's penetrating scepticism. It is an old

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING

one and an old-fashioned one; and, though it has been put in a thousand forms by poet, moralist, philosopher, and artist, none of these is more complete than the simple statement, "Whosoever will lose his life shall find it."

To go through life an absorbent instead of a radiant is a terrible mistake, to call it no worse name. To discover that mistake only at the end of life is to re-enact the tragedy of the man at the feast without the wedding garment. Have you ever thought how it would seem, after being trained carefully to a certain code of propriety, to a knowledge of the fitness of things, to susceptibility to ridicule or embarrassment, suddenly to find yourself utterly and absurdly unfit for the life into which you were thrust? It would be like no human experience so much as that which we sometimes struggle through in a dream, when we imagine ourselves at a great assembly in the clothing of our sleep.

Now against this mistake the old saying protects us: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall find it." As a philosophy of success, this is worth studying.

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

Let us ask, first, if there are presumptive grounds for its truth; and, second, What is in detail the course of action that it would mark out for us?

At first sight it seems that the philosophy of the losing of life is at variance with what we call "worldly wisdom." We are in the habit, and rightly, of regarding many moral questions from the position of the man of business. It is a good position: it is common sense. We talk about accumulations of character as we talk of accumulations of invested funds. We often regard heaven as a savings-bank that will pay us high and regular interest on any noble deeds or good motives we may record there. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" is a more quoted verse than "Whosoever will save his life must lose it." I have a suspicion that we overstrain and misinterpret that figure of the bank. Life has a higher philosophy than that which governs Wall Street.

Money, a lifeless, unconscious thing, incapable of stimulation, grows by being saved, it is true, though it also has other ways of growing; but the great grass crop of our land would be ruined if for years it should be unmown. A bed of pansies blossoms

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING

more abundantly, and with rarer beauty, when the flowers are often plucked. In the realm of nature no life is saved. The drop of dew that gives itself to the rose, the violets that you pick for your morning nosegay, the great prairie that gives its treasures of wheat and corn year by year, the mother who forgets her own hunger or weariness that her child may be fed and comforted, everything that truly lives loses its life. Every analogy of nature supports the Christian paradox. The gymnasium, the farm, the class-room, are all marked by the loss of the temporary, and the following gain of the permanent.

It is high time to ask what we mean by losing the life. There was never an age which desired to live so fully and so deeply as does ours. We travel, eager to absorb the experience of strange places. Novels, poetry, and the drama are all so many contrivances for compressing years of experience into hours of actual time. There is no device for enriching life which does not commend itself to this age. But losing one's life does not mean for most of us the abandoning the customary method of our life for some eccentric or ascetic ideal, but rather that we should glorify and transform the

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

common round by the spirit in which we tread it. That spirit is simply the spirit of sacrifice. We are to hold lightly our own way in the hope that by giving up that way we may help some other life. The eye is to be keen to catch the happy moment when some one may be the better for our cheer. Sacrifice must become the true atmosphere in which the soul lives and breathes. If sacrifice is to be healthy, and not morbid, it must have certain qualities. Let us see what some of them are.

In the first place, then, the sacrifice must be far-reaching, wide, generous. All about us are the weak, the weary, the tempted, the perplexed, the despairing: they must be made the less wretched by our gifts. If we are peculiarly furnished with privilege and resource, we may find ourselves either the more zealous to help them or the less so. We may live, as we have too often lived, among our books, our friends, and our pleasures, drinking in every joy of life, until the instinct of sacrifice is deadened. We may prize our friends because they minister to our taste, as does food or music. We may never look below the bright talk or the unchanged face to see the life-and-death

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING

struggle after righteousness that is going on in the depths of conscience, or, on the other hand, we may be alert for every human need. We may keep our eyes open for the trifles that tell of the perturbed soul. We may be wise to know when a pressure of the hand will help the spirit more than armies could do. We may be alive to humankind and its needs.

Once more, our sacrifice should be cheerful. We all know the exaggerated type of grumbler, who works hard and faithfully, and never fails to assure one that she is the most abused mortal under the sun. The hospitality of the house where you are sumptuously entertained at the expense of bad temper by both hostess and servants, you don't care to enjoy a second time. The philanthropist that never forgets his own burdens in those of others is a poor lover of his kind. I think the generous giver ought to be modest as well as cheerful. You know the little flower called bloodroot. I never have pleasure in picking it, because from its roots issues a tiny drop, which seems to say, "I will give you my spring beauty, but I suffer in the doing." One may pull up the braver arbutus, root and all, without such a protest.

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

Generosity must not only be modest, but it must be wise: for example, it must be regulated by what we have to give. The man who writes a check for one hundred dollars for a friend and leaves no money in his bank to pay the butcher is almost a thief, though he may be generous. The physician who loses his self-possession, and puts his lips to the tube to suck the poison from a wound instead of adjusting a safer apparatus, is a suicide, though an unselfish man. Grass must not be pulled up by the roots if it is to grow again. Giving must always be within our means.

Here education is invaluable. It teaches us to know our limitations. The trouble with half of the fretful women in our land to-day is that they gave too lavishly in the beginning. The truest unselfishness is consistent with good health. The opposite doctrine was taught, it is true, by the ascetics of five hundred years ago; and it is to be distrusted as we now distrust the science of that earlier time.

Thus far I have not touched on the motive of conduct which seems to me the noblest for men and women; but you know what I believe that to be. Cold print

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING

cannot well express it, yet we must try to put it into a few words. Ambition, high resolve, personal pride, fine human sympathy, are not sufficient to hold the spirit to its battle with life, still less to surmount its mountains of discouragement. Once let the doubt whether anything is worth while find lodgment in the heart of a woman, and the heavens turn black, the clouds settle down over the earth, and the firm ground trembles under her feet.

Against such a trial only one power can prevail. A Personal Force comes to the aid of a personal struggle. For an abstraction the spirit has no courage; but for a Person, high, noble, and *rejected*, the whole force of the soul rises in splendid devotion. The trained spiritual sense, which becomes slowly conscious of this Person day in and day out, is finally our most precious possession. It can not be yawned into existence as a relief from ennui. Its growth is slow, but steady, in a healthy soul. Only one disease can kill it when once an honest desire has implanted it. That one disease is deliberate sin. Into the darkness of selfish sin, chosen in preference to purity, the very Sun of Righteousness can not shine. But once let the heart long for

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

goodness with a complete, perpetual passion, and the low-hanging mists of discouragement will be scattered by the presence in the soul of a Radiant Figure, so magnetic and so commanding that allegiance to Him shall swallow up doubt, and the paradox be made clear that he who, for His sake, will lose his life, indeed shall find it.

EGOTISM

MY DEAR MARGARET: I have been rereading *The Egoist*, by George Meredith. What a great book it is! Far the best of his works, it seems to me, and likely to be the most permanent, because the least marred by his irritating mannerisms. It has an amusing tendency to make one discover the egoist among one's friends, and often in one's self. By the way, I have always wondered why Mr. Meredith preferred the word "egoist" to "egotist." "Egoist" has a technical meaning in the sciences both of psychology and ethics, and in neither does it indicate a blameworthy state of mind: whereas "egotist" is constantly used by careful writers to indicate the man having an intellectual convic-

EGOTISM

tion that he bears a larger relation to the scheme of things in the world than he actually does bear. For my purpose, then, I shall talk about the victim of this fault as the "egotist," not the "egoist." Egotism may or may not be associated with the outward phenomena of selfishness. It is an attitude of mind, not a code of behaviour. Some of the most thoroughly egotistical women I have ever known have had beautifully polished manners, although by the careful observer they were seen to be superficial. Of course, as long as human personality lives, the Ego must be more interesting to one's self than to any one outside of it; but the constant habit of referring every circumstance of life to myself, of considering every human being as important only as he ministers to my happiness, and, in short, of making myself, as Dr. Holmes laughingly made Boston, "the hub of the universe,"—this is surely to put all of one's landscape out of perspective.

In my long observation of young girls, I have noted many types of egotism. There is the foolish egotist who chatters about herself from morning to night. She talks so much about her native town, her family,

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

her home, that her victims know all the people by their first names, and learn to endure the infliction by the help of covert smiles at her silliness. Very different from her, but none the less belonging to her class, is the critical egotist. Nothing in this world quite pleases her. She would improve upon the sky and the flowers if she might be permitted. Her strongest phrase of approbation is "not half bad." She tolerates other people's society with bad grace, she patronises most of the great masters of literature, she has no enthusiasms; and the curious thing about it is that one discovers, after a year of acquaintance, that she is herself by no means the paragon of learning and ability which one has been led to suppose. George Eliot has a delightful description of this kind of egotist: —

"I have observed this remarkable coincidence, that the select natures who pant after the ideal, and find nothing in pantaloons or petticoats great enough to command their reverence and love, are curiously in unison with the narrowest and pettiest. For example, I have often heard Mr. Gedge, the landlord of the Royal Oak, who used to turn a bloodshot eye on his neighbours in the

EGOTISM

village of Shepperton, sum up his opinion of the people in his own parish — and they were all the people he knew — in these emphatic words : ‘ Ay, sir, I’ve said it often, and I’ll say it again, they’re a poor lot i’ this parish,— a poor lot, sir, big and little.’ I think he had a dim idea that, if he could migrate to a distant parish, he might find neighbours worthy of him ; and, indeed, he did subsequently transfer himself to the Saracen’s Head, which was doing a thriving business in the back street of a neighbouring market-town. But, oddly enough, he has found the people up that back street of precisely the same stamp as the inhabitants of Shepperton, — ‘ a poor lot, sir, big and little, and them as comes for a go o’ gin are no better than them as comes for a pint o’ twopenny,— a poor lot.’ ”

Another of my classes — the eccentric egotist — is becoming smaller. The woman who used to wear her hair short, take off her hat like a man in public places, and in general affect peculiarity of dress and manner, is heard of less frequently, and is slowly adapting herself to the demands of society. But another class is gaining numbers as fast as this one is losing them. The rude egotist is

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

seen everywhere at the moment, even in those ranks of society where one would hardly expect to find her. Her elbows and her loud voice mark her out on the crowded pavement. She talks in a raucous whisper straight through a concert or a lecture. She saunters and dawdles over a crowded golf links. She greets the most venerable of her grandmother's friends with a nod such as she should scarcely bestow on a terrier of her acquaintance. She makes life a burden to people about her with her noisiness. She is mistress of slang, though mistress of nothing else. We all know her. She is one of the most unlovely products of our time.

There is another girl who may or may not be a rude egotist, but who is emphatically a pleasure-loving egotist. She stops at nothing to get her own sweet will. She has in her some of the qualities of the cat, and she often glides and steals into disobedience to law without making so much fuss about it as would be made by the rude egotist. She is dangerous to society, for she is not so conspicuously objectionable as others of her kind; and more than once I have seen her married to a good man before he so much as guessed the hidden selfishness frozen into the

EGOTISM

centre of her heart. You can add to my list a good many other varieties, but these are enough to show us how prevalent is the vice.

Now for the cure. Unlike the cure for many of the superficial faults, it is primarily intellectual. An egotist cannot be made over by her emotions; for the more she feels, as a rule, the more self-centred she becomes. She admires herself for the very strength of her feeling. She does not strictly fall in love with anybody save with herself, and she has no sensitiveness to ordinary appeals made to the heart. The task, then, is largely that of getting an idea into her somewhat stupid head as to the absurd figure she really cuts. I remember an example of it, on a small scale, which I once had with a very pretty girl who had a bad stoop. I had tried by every means in my power to make her set her mind to the cure of it, and so had her teacher in gymnastics. The more we said "Stand up straight!" the less attention, apparently, she paid to us. One day I was walking beside her into a crowded hall, and she chanced to overhear a man,—a stranger to her, I think,—who said to his companion, with a look at her: "There's a pretty girl! What a shame she has such an ungraceful

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

carriage!" The work was done by that one short, sharp speech. The idea had finally penetrated her mind, and from that moment she set herself to correct the ugly defect. Now, if one can succeed in doing this sort of thing to a real egotist, something like a cure may be effected; but you can see that the task is a difficult one, for the disease arms itself against the thrust of truth.

Matthew Arnold's suggestion as to the training of the judgment to distinguish great poetry may perhaps be a practical one when transferred into the realm of character. He says:—

"There can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class truly excellent than to have always in one's mind lines and extracts of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry. Of course, we are not to require this other poetry to resemble them. It may be very dissimilar; but, if we have any tact, we shall find them, when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetical quality, and also the degree of this quality in all other poetry which we may place beside them."

EGOTISM

Now something like what may be done for the judgment by these fragments of noble verse may be done in regard to character by a judicious hero-worship. Once let a girl admire the very best in human character and you will have taken at least one step toward the cure of egotism. I have said that egotism cannot be approached from the emotions. It may seem a contradiction to advocate the admiration of great character as such a cure. But I do not mean the process which we call falling in love. I mean rather the admiration for the person above us, both in ability and achievement, which comes to us first through our judgment, and which finally may result in the forming of a noble ideal. You will not think me sermonising if I say that this is what makes Christianity the great destroyer of egotism. Admiration, reaching to worship of an unspeakably beautiful character, is wholesome enough for us poor mortals. Saint Paul had in him many of the qualities which go to make up an intellectual self-satisfaction; and yet, out of his experience with Christianity, he was brought to the splendid humility of the phrase, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

THE VIRTUE OF RETICENCE

MY DEAR HELEN: The publication of the letters of many distinguished folk has gone to a great length lately. It has come about that within two years we have had even the *love* letters of no less than three sets of lovers,—the Brownings, Victor Hugo and his future wife, and Bismarck and his future wife. We certainly are losing our sense of reserve. Much as these letters may tell us of the personality of their writers, I think every right-minded woman feels after reading them as if she were in the position of a person at a keyhole,—a position not very dignified for the reader. Years ago Mr. Edward Rowland Sill wrote to me: "What a staggering lot of books the publishers turn out on a weary world! What gabblers we are! Gabblers that write and gobblers that read, for no doubt it is the demand that creates the supply." If that was measurably true a dozen years ago, it is twice true now. Every sort of personal confidence which the author can make, he makes to the willing public. Letters, autobiographies, interviews, the poems which set forth the discords of domestic life,—all these are poured forth in an increasing flood.

The VIRTUE OF RETICENCE

Now this phenomenon in the literary world is indicative of what is taking place in the world of men and women about us. Reticence is out of fashion. Ready expression and quick sympathy have taken its place. They are not its equal in the art of building vigorous character. The whole age seems to be standing gaping about us. It tries to drive us into a toil. The self-respecting soul is fain to answer with the words of Hamlet to his treacherous friends : "Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me ! You would play upon me ; you would seem to know my stops ; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery ; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass. And there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe ? Call me what instrument you will, though you fret me, you cannot play upon me."

We talk, talk, talk about ourselves. Many women and many girls seem never to let a drop of sap get above a certain spigot,—the lips ; and consequently they never put forth a new leaf toward heaven. The chatterer is

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

never a woman of thought. Deep purposes, keen insights, do not thrive on much talk. The needs of conversation are great, but the world waits for other service than that done by the pleasant talker. If you suggest that I am contradicting myself in what I have said to you about the large, free use of words, I shall reply, "No." The ability to talk, and to talk well, is a different thing from the habit of talking from morning to night.

Matters have not much changed since I was a girl, and in those days girls greatly enjoyed making confidences to each other. There was a thrilling excitement about it. Friendship often seemed to be cemented by such outpourings. One felt a certain virtue in them, as if they cleared the record of sins or faults and enabled one to begin again. Now I suspect that all this is really poor discipline for a growing spirit. There are certain kinds of confidences which seem to me especially vicious. Let me tell you what some of them are. First, there are the confidences between girl friends which are brought forth at the midnight hour, often as the result of that moral relaxation which comes with physical weariness. They are

The VIRTUE OF RETICENCE

exciting, egotistic, dramatic. They are likely to be out of keeping with the prosaic life of the next forenoon. They may be tales of personal experience made up of half-truths and of the results of a vagrant imagination. The mere putting of them into words is bad educationally, since it confuses truth and falsehood in the mind of both teller and hearer. I do not mean to imply that these confidences contain anything base or actually wicked, but that they are so foolish and inaccurate as to be weakening to the structure of character. They would not bear the sun, but they masquerade impressively under the cloak of night. It is a good rule never to tell anybody anything which you could not tell in broad daylight, with the width of the room between you and your confidant.

In the second place, there are confidences regarding past faults and sins, made often for the sake of becoming interesting to your listener. It is possible for these to be carried to an unfortunate extent. I remember years ago, when a wave of temperance reform swept over the country, and many clubs were formed in small towns for the reclamation of the drunkard, that the weekly

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

meetings of many of those clubs became positively disgusting on account of the revelations which the men seemed to enjoy making, of the depths to which they had fallen. This morbid appetite for notoriety grew; and it was difficult to believe that the men were really much better when intoxicated by their own confessions than they had been in the previous state which they so vividly pictured. Of course, nothing so gross as this would come into the experience of an ordinary girl; but I cite it as an illustration of an excess to which the impulse might easily go.

Again, I fear there is some truth in the common sneer that a woman loves to tell a secret. The forbidden confidence has charms for her. Even the most cautious and responsible woman can scarcely look back over her girlhood without blushing at the memory of some moment when she said to some other girl: "Will you promise never to tell? I ought not to tell you, for I promised not to; but, if you will never, never tell!" It may well take years of painstaking guard over the tongue to obliterate the shame of such a recollection.

If the tale of these deliberate confidences

The VIRTUE OF RETICENCE

is a long one, that of the more impulsive, less open disclosures is longer yet. It is not simply that once and again a woman tells all that she has a right to tell of herself or of others. She goes farther. Not a device for imparting much by little but has been used by indiscreet women. The glance, the shrug, the whisper, the rapid by-play, all have their parts in that conversation which might better not be. Shakespeare, the master of the human heart, knew well of what he wrote when he put into Hamlet's mouth the adjuration to Horatio and Marcellus. (We may get such comfort as we can from the reflection that he, at least, was speaking to men.)

"That you, at such time seeing me, never shall
With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase
As, 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an' if we
would,
Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an' if they
might,'
Or such ambiguous giving-out, to note
That you know aught of me : this not to do,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
Swear."

It would be as useless as it is impossible
to name all the temptations to speech when

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

silence would serve better. I shall have my wish if these few instances may induce you to interpose one instant of reflection between the thought and the word. On that stern habit the spirit thrives. Reserve fosters strength, and strength in its turn transforms reserve from pain to pleasure. Two thousand years ago a wise old Roman said, "I have often regretted my speech, never my silence." Yet the years have not sufficed to teach us the wisdom of his confession.

THE PLEASURE OF STRUGGLE

MY DEAR HELEN: I hope before the summer is over that you will have a taste of mountain climbing. It has become a fashionable amusement, and it deserves its place better than many other amusements. There is something in it which answers to a primary need of our natures. We often grumble at the demands that life makes upon us, we complain of hard work, of numberless calls upon thought and responsibility; but the worst thing which could happen to us would be to be cut off from the necessity of effort. There is inherent pleasure in struggle. Along

PLEASURE OF STRUGGLE

with the curse, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," came the blessing, "He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment." We have the right to expect pleasure in the results of our work, but we make a mistake if we don't also find pleasure in the very work itself. We go to the top of the mountain, not only for the view, but for the enjoyment of climbing. But in our every-day lives we often do our work perfunctorily, relying for pleasure upon the diversions that we can invent. Character does not thrive with no pleasure but dancing, golf, tennis, novels, fencing, and talking. We may live on the anticipation of the success we shall have when we are fairly in the world, but this is airy food. There is a pleasure in the very act of work. If we miss it, something is wrong with our method. Let us go back to our illustration of mountain climbing, and see what are the conditions necessary to make effort pleasurable.

In the first place, we must have a fair chance. There is no fun in trying to climb an impossible mountain: it is depressing to climb when the sun is so hot that prostration is the result of effort; struggle in a dense fog is the most frightful of experiences. The

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

conditions, then, must be tolerable, and give us, to repeat the phrase, a fair chance.

In the second place, we must have energy of mind, which may be distinct from energy of body. When a man climbs a mountain, he must be eager to do it. He must be free from the pressure of cares, his heart must be in the effort. Again, he must be free from anxiety about the result. Worry and pleasure are incompatible. Often the mere strain of haste may be too trying a one. A young fellow climbing a mountain passed an old man plodding along with an indifferent air. He gave a half contemptuous thought to the dulness and heaviness of the old man's gait; but, before the top was reached, the plodder overtook our hero, tired and hopelessly out of breath. As he walked steadily past the exhausted boy, he drawled out, "Young man, the way to climb a mountain is to act as if you didn't care a hang whether you ever got to the top or not."

Given these three conditions,—the fair chance, energy, and a freedom from anxiety about results,—and no obstacles are too difficult to be inspiring.

Bringing the analogy to the mental and spiritual facts of life, we see that the theory

PLEASURE OF STRUGGLE

applies equally well to the struggle to be wise, good, useful. In certain conditions, being wise and being good carry with them their own reward of happiness. Righteousness pays as it goes along.

If anybody ever had a chance to be good, it is the American girl of to-day. She is too young to be bound by the fetters of unconquerable habit. She may have some desperate struggles with uncontrolled imagination, with selfishness, with harsh speaking, with deceit, with frivolity; but these are fair fights, and she should win in every one of them. She has a clear chance to be good.

Girls don't much need urging to zeal, but it may be worth while to say that pleasure must be subordinated to work if either is to be relished. We cannot afford to deify the trifles of personal enjoyment. The Emperor Severus Septimus, dying after a life of splendid energy, spoke as a last word to his son the famous counsel, "Laboremus,"—Let us labour. The Christian version of the pagan sentiment is, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." No one has watched the labour of skilled hands without feeling that their control of mechanism

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

is superb. More inspiring is the work which weaves not cloth, but character. Righteousness does not come by accident: one does not yawn it into being with a wish. We must, indeed, be stupid if we do not have the keenest pleasure in conscious self-improvement.

But no favouring conditions can make work pleasant if we are in doubt about the result. There are two essentials to make work pleasurable. The first is the certainty of success. Success does not mean the winning of high honours or the reaching of distinguished attainments. Success means character. In the struggle for that there is no essential element but the human will. The world's history teems with instances of men and women who have "made themselves over," as the phrase goes; but, to do this, we must have a high philosophy of relative values, and with contented spirit we must be sure that the heavens will not fall upon our heads and that the earth will not sink under our feet. Of course, I am coming to the old story of the place of religion in ordinary life. A confidence that the world is ruled by love, and that every man's life is a plan of God, will go far to take away the abject terror

"I AM SORRY"

into which a human soul might be plunged if it were forced to believe in its own solitude. Given an old-fashioned faith, and the conditions of life for the modern girl ought to make struggle even more fascinating than what we call "amusement," and success as certain as the sunrise.

"I AM SORRY"

MY DEAR HELEN: I feel inclined, on this Sunday night, to send you a small preachment, which will be none the less welcome, I hope, because it is not the result of any particular naughtiness on your part. I always used to find it a good plan to lecture girls about the sins I feared they were going to commit rather than those they had at the moment committed.

There is a phrase often on our lips which we use so carelessly that it becomes empty, though it ought to represent a deep personal experience. It is the little phrase, "I am sorry." It often pretends to magic or mysterious power. It serves as an excuse to mother, teacher, or friend, for disobedience, idleness, or neglect, and seems to many a girl

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

to wipe out all stain from the leaf and make the day as good as new. The truth is, however, that, unless it answers to a real state of conscience, it gives no such absolution, and by its frequent use blunts the conscience and dulls the moral intuition.

Let us think for a moment what "I am sorry" often means. Again and again we use it to express distress at being found out in a fault. We are uncomfortable when we have forgotten a promise or spoken a brutal word which has been traced back to us; and we utter our glib expression of penitence, though it is really as false as any blacker lie. "Thou shalt not get found out," we are told, is the chief commandment of the Chinese; but it surely ought not to find a place in our moral code.

Again, we profess sorrow for an act, when we simply regret having grieved or offended a certain person, though we have not a twinge of conscience for the sin itself. To sink in the esteem of a friend is humiliating and painful. We like to mistake this for that wholesome ache which is the "growing pain" of character.

Most contemptible of all, we may be sorry only that we must be punished, with no sort

"I AM SORRY"

of regret for our moral loss in some selfish or cruel word or deceitful act. In fact there is no more soothing salve than this superficial penitence, which never reaches below the wounded surface of vanity.

What ought to be meant by "I am sorry." ? It should come only as the clear voice of a well-trained conscience, speaking as positively as the false note of his string speaks to the ear of a violinist. Morality is the good taste of the spirit, and a lapse from it should disturb every sense as keenly as any most violent discord of sound or colour jars the ear or eye of an artist. But it is not enough that the words should come from the conscience. If they have any force in them, they must be obeyed, as well as heard; and the fruit of the sin, whatever it may be, must be instantly surrendered.

The girl that has taken praise that did not belong to her must hasten to set herself right in the eyes of the people whom she has deceived. The girl that has given circulation to a piece of cruel gossip must retrace her steps, and not only express her contrition to the victim, but remove as far as she can the wrong impression her words made on the minds of others. The girl that has secured

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

a permission by a falsehood must be ready to give up the coveted pleasure as well as to bear the shame of confession. Yet, farther, the really penitent, whether the sin be large or small, must accept willingly the natural penalty, without trying to supplant it by an artificial punishment that might be more easily borne. Men and women, from the earliest times till now, have always been preferring to adjust their own punishments. Professor James says somewhere, "The personally chosen penalty always goes wrong." Of course, it is easier to give the price of a ribbon to a beggar, and hope thus to square the account with the avenging fates, than to take bravely the loss of esteem which would follow making a clean breast of a fault to a friend; but by no such means can we divert the real loss of moral worth. Sooner or later we reap what we sow,—not some crop of other weeds easier to harvest than those we have planted.

I doubt if, in this age of the world, penance is ever health-giving. Certainly, it is not if it is self-chosen. If we are to be restored morally, we must allow legitimate punishment to do its sharp and sanative work on mind and character. Finally, true sorrow for

"I AM SORRY"

a fault, the surrender of the fruits of the sin, and submission to the penalty which it brings will leave us strong to resist the same temptation instead of weaker to withstand it.

It is the bitter result of moral failure that it is progressive in its deadly effect. The social lie which reddens the cheek to-day is told without a tremor next week. The flippant laugh at a questionable bit of gossip ceases to be forced before the end of the first winter in society. The breakfast-table irritability, which once made the whole day unhappy with the remembrance of it, becomes a matter of course, if often indulged. But when "I am sorry" comes not only from the lips, but from conscience, mind, and heart as well, penitence sets up a barrier against that particular sin instead of levelling one. "To do so no more," says George Eliot, "is the truest repentance." We may well say that the truest repentance does the harmful act no more, and then, working out its own beneficent result, leaves the heart stronger for further conflict.

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

TELLING LIES

MY DEAR HELEN: I had the uncomfortable experience to-day of catching a young woman in a plain fib. We sat on the veranda, just beginning what promised to be a long and interesting talk, when three ladies came up the path. She said impulsively: "Oh, dear! How horrid of them to spoil our afternoon! I can't endure them!" Twenty seconds afterward she rose graciously and greeted them with: "I am delighted to see you. Do come right up and sit down. How kind of you to come this hot day!" The words were scarce out of her mouth when she caught my eye, her colour rose, and she was as uncomfortable as you would wish to see any one. Here is my text: What are we really to do about social lies? Do they exist in any considerable number? Have they effect upon character or upon society?

The complexity of modern life has introduced a thousand new temptations to evade the truth. When life was very simple, and its social obligations comparatively few, it was pretty easy to be truthful and still protect one's personality from invasion and keep

TELLING LIES

one's counsel. To-day it is difficult to do these things. Because it is difficult, we are growing, I think, more lenient to certain evasions of the truth; and one may almost classify the different kinds of lies for which people apologise. For example, there is the lie of good nature, like the one I just cited to you. There is the lie of fear, told often by children, and too often, nowadays, by grown folk. Perhaps the best example of this is the fib which many people fall back upon when they are accused of not having answered a letter, and assure a correspondent either that they have never received it or that their own reply has miscarried. Uncle Sam's mail-bag must have many holes in it if half of these mis-sent letters ever really get out of it. Then there is the lie of exaggeration. Sometimes it is not intended seriously to deceive, but oftener it is told to increase our own importance in the eyes of some one. How many times one hears a half-dozen girls matching stories of miraculous experiences, of hair-breadth escapes, of heart-broken lovers, and so on. Then there are fibs for the sake of keeping a confidence intact. I sometimes question whether anybody has

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

a right to tell me a secret which he knows it may take a lie to protect. Again, there is the lie of silence,—sometimes the most effective and cruel of lies. To utter no protest when my friend is maligned is often easy, but it is usually wicked.

Now these are only a few kinds of untruth which result from the frictions of character and of social life, and to which we are becoming lenient in others and in ourselves. We behave as if we thought they had no effect upon character, and were not really rendering the mind tolerant toward untruthfulness. The fact is that it is impossible to let untruthfulness enter character by one door and shut it out by another. Truth is the basis on which all life rests. It is not the world which hears and believes or disbelieves the lies we tell which is really harmed by them: it is the head that conceived them and the conscience that ignored or pardoned them. It does not take many years for the whole structure of character to be weakened by these corroding stains. What is to be done about them? The only way to keep the character clear of the blot is not simply to avoid telling lies, but to cultivate a real love for the truth. The love of

TELLING LIES

beauty shows itself in a hundred ways in its influence upon conduct: so must the love of truth become an actual and potent factor in our lives. A negative conviction always fails in keeping out lies. There must be a positive one. Do not suppose that truthfulness and tact are incompatible. It is not necessary to be brusque in the effort to be sincere. A genuine desire for kindness and generosity may live side by side with a crystalline sincerity.

It is good for us occasionally to be found out in one of these little lies, and then to see how beautiful truth looks beside it. I told my young woman this afternoon that I wanted her to promise me for a week to review each day before she slept, and make a little note of the lies she had actually told. I believe the process would be salutary for a good many of us. The last and bitterest punishment for a long course of deceit is that finally one should be given over to believe a lie. Self-deception is the final penalty for the deception of others, until at last the victim of his own small sins goes out blind into a world whose only light is the light of truth.

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

THE DUTY OF HEALTH

MY DEAR HELEN : I am sorry to hear that you are ill, but I hope that you will find some comfort in the reflection that the illness is through no fault of yours. You must set that consolation over against the fact that nobody will give you much sympathy for your discomfort in one of the afflictions usual to the period of childhood. I wonder if you will like to read a dissertation upon health while you are shut up in the hospital.

There are two kinds of sickness in the world : the first is the one which you are at present enduring. You have no more responsibility for having mumps, or even for diphtheria, than I have for the colour of my eyes. Our Puritan fathers were used to speak of these things as "a dispensation of Providence," and the phrase was well chosen. These illnesses must be borne with a steady courage and an equally steady reticence. It requires fortitude to be tolerably silent about the pain of such a trial, and it takes courage to sustain one's self through the dull and dreary hours of the illness. Still, pain borne heroically is often an obvious blessing, not only to the victim, but to all the friends that see her heroism.

The DUTY OF HEALTH

I doubt, however, if more than one-quarter of all the illness among our social class can properly be considered unpreventable by the victim. The truth is that most illness comes from ignorance or carelessness, or both. For this there is no philosophy, and perhaps there should be none. A heavy cold contracted by a moment's carelessness cannot be borne patiently in any such fashion as I expect you to bear your present sickness. Of course, this does not mean that you shall have license to complain and wear out all your family when you suffer for your own sins; but I do not see how one can be inwardly at peace under a scourge of one's own preparing. Perhaps one of the motives for better care next time is this very impatience with our own stupidity.

A girl at fifteen enters upon the management of a vast trust fund: it is her health. Next to the gift of time itself, it is the most precious thing she possesses. She never realises this until her treasure is somehow depleted. We never think how good it is not to have headache until the pain is upon us. Now the truth is that the girl who squanders this trust fund which we call "health" is as much a thief as is the

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

man who misappropriates the property intrusted to him for widows and orphans. Health means not only strength for pleasure, but strength for social service. The world perhaps owes me a living; but I owe the world my life, and a healthy life as well. It is hard that one should be called to account for the care of so priceless a treasure when one has no experience in such care, but this is inevitable. Take such facts of experience as I have to offer you, and let them, if they may, ripen a harvest of their own in your wisdom and good practice.

Here are a few commonplace hints about the preservation of health for the ordinary girl. In the first place, she should have proper food, in proper quantities, at proper times, week in and week out. You will say the requirements are very vague. So they are, and must be. Regularity is an essential element in feeding the body, and good judgment is another. The truth is that all the maxims of health become foolish and useless unless they are applied by this same common sense. "What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit!" Half the time, when questions of health are concerned, we seem not

The DUTY OF HEALTH

to apply our own common sense to them. The sweetmeat habit, the nibbling habit, the starving habit, the stuffing habit, are about equally undesirable. Happy the girl who possesses a healthy appetite, and at whose mother's table common sense and good cooking prevail! If there is one practice more disastrous than another to the school-girl's health, I think it is the eating and drinking between meals. The seductive ice-cream soda is responsible for more muddy complexions and more megrims than you will believe. Use your own high intelligence to learn a little out of any ordinary text-book where are described the process of digestion, and the delicate and intricate machinery which carries it on. Then, without acquiring self-consciousness about the work which goes on in your own person, see if you cannot learn to be kind, at least, to your own stomach. Better five attacks of healthy hunger than one half-hour of that satiety and disgust which come from repletion.

We used to laugh at the girl who starved herself that she might remain slight, and ate slate-pencils and chalk to increase her interesting pallor. I suppose she has given place to the girl who has no self-control in the

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

matter of eating, and who clogs and embarrasses all her intellectual and spiritual operations by gormandising in season and out of season. Neither to the one extreme nor to the other do I commend you. A healthy appetite is a great blessing. If it has not been given you, try to find out how to earn it. To this end you must consult your physician, not your teacher. But a reasonable self-control in matters of appetite is within the reach of any high-minded girl.

The second of my little maxims is the avoidance of needless exposure. Wet feet and wet skirts are sins: regard them as sins. The girl who forgets her overshoes, and inflicts the coughing and sneezing of a heavy cold upon the household, deserves all the pain she suffers, and more. That, however, does not cancel her indebtedness to the trust fund of health, which she has thoughtlessly incurred. Don't say now that I am preaching the policy of coddling. Far from it. Regular and sensible care of one's conditions, instead of rendering one soft and susceptible, makes one ready to withstand exposure when it is necessary. A series of severe colds leaves one ready to be a victim to any chance microbe which may be seek-

The DUTY OF HEALTH

ing shelter. On the other hand, a clean skin, free lungs, and a sound digestion are the most discouraging of foes to threatening disease.

In the third place, my healthy girl should have eight or nine hours of sleep, taken during the night. For once in a way sleeping late in the morning may be very well, but I have never been able to bring myself to believe that morning sleep had the same power for refreshment that comes when the world and nature share our rest. I like well the old-fashioned way of dividing our day: eight hours for sleep, eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation, this last including, of course, our eating. Nobody whose life is thus ordered should complain of overwork. I doubt whether inclination to sleep is reason enough for a girl to increase this allotment of hours; and I am sure that disinclination to sleep as much as this is a definite warning against overwork. The highly strung nerve does not readily relax.

Once more, we cannot be healthy without suitable exercise. You say again I use a vague adjective. Who is to determine what is suitable? Evidently, the person in

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

question, and with such enlightened intelligence as she can command. About no physical requirement is there greater difference of opinion than in regard to this matter of exercise. Temperament and occupation have much to do with it. The woman who spends a large part of each day on her feet about her household cares certainly does not need the bicycle or golf or a long walk as does the woman who sits over book and pen hour after hour. I suspect that sometimes the need for fresh air is confused with the need for exercise, and the really tired woman makes herself the more tired for the sake of relieving the oppression which comes from breathing vitiated air. Cultivate a keen sense of poor ventilation, and try to correct it in your surroundings. Good work is seldom done where there is a lack of oxygen. The best advice one can give another person about exercise is that that person shall really take into serious consideration her own habits in this regard, and by experiment shall find out what is the surest path to the desired end of health.

I have already said that all rules for health presume intelligence on the part of the person that applies them. I think that I

The DUTY OF HEALTH

should add that they also presume the ability to keep one's self free from hobby-riding. I am very tired of all the folk who have discovered panaceas for disease. Neither oatmeal nor blue glass, nor Swedish gymnastics nor Christian Science, nor osteopathy nor abstinence from eating of breakfast, nor dress reform, nor cold water, nor vegetarianism, will secure health. The names of these "fads," and others like them, might be multiplied by twenty in the history of the last century of American life. Every one of them militates against that clear sanity which is the best preservative of human health. "A sound mind in a sound body" is a fine maxim; and, to preserve that balance, one must look out for the condition of the mind as well as of the body. It is curious and interesting, and I believe that it is true, that the great men of the world, from Napoleon to Edison, and from Socrates to Lincoln, appear to have been free from any of these hobbies in regard to personal practice in eating, drinking, and sleeping, and the other habits of life; whereas the dyspeptic clergyman, the anæmic teacher, and the consumptive clerk are often able to tell you, with positive certainty, the one specific for health

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

and long life. They ignore the great fact that man is made for varied experiences. His superiority over the animals that eat flesh alone, as to those who live upon vegetables exclusively, is gained in this very demand for variety. He needs it in his life, in his habit, in his body, in his thought. He needs all this variety to demonstrate that it shall have a regularity of its own, and that both variety and regularity shall be his servants, not his masters.

If I were a poet, I would write an ode to health. If some of the poets had possessed this same homely blessing, we should have been spared their poems "written in dejection." Paradoxical as it may seem, health is the panacea for all the ills of life. It is also the enricher of all its joys. It paints the sky bluer, and the grass greener, and the snow whiter, and the mountains nobler. Wind and rain, and dust and cold, are grateful to it, since they all give fresh room for endurance and resistance. Even sorrow and failure borrow new courage from health. Without it the most fortunate life must seem hard and cruel. With it the severest life must have in it some brightness and hope.

OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

MY DEAR MARGARET: I am not surprised that soon after your return to your home you are met by what we call "the Sunday problem." It is beginning to be a difficult one everywhere; and it appears to me that all educated women must address themselves to it, to find a working theory for its solution which shall be tenable in the face of all the varying practices that have place in city and country. One of the difficult elements in the question will, I think, be removed in your case. You will find yourself, as I understand, pretty free as regards your personal conduct and the method of life in your family, since neither is hampered by tradition, owing to your years of absence, and to the fact that your parents have not been residing long in their present home. Let me try to outline what would be for me a satisfactory theory if I were in your place.

First, we must acknowledge that one of the steps which marks progress in civilisation is a recognition of the necessity that one day in seven shall be different in its relation to life from the other six days. This, of course, is entirely apart from the religious sanction for such difference. All human experience goes

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

to show the importance of such a break. Even a railroad engine, I am told, lives longer by being allowed to rest on certain specified days. Surely it is true of a man or a woman. This being granted, it will be evident that the occupations and interests of Sunday should be, as far as possible, a distinct change from those of other days. All our methods of conducting business help to make this possible. The closing of the shops, the banks, the mills, and the great offices, determines a change in the current of thought for hundreds of thousands of people. Hence they must all call upon either the lower or the higher part of their nature to take possession of the so-called "day of rest." That is, the occupations of Sunday, taken as a whole, must be either nobler than those of other days or less noble. The higher call is, I think, the one to which every sensitive spirit ought to answer heartily and cheerfully. Apart from any religious command, then, everybody ought to make of Sunday a better day, one richer in high experience, freer from trivial cares, less frivolous, less self-indulgent than the other days. If you reply that all the week should be of the same character, and that to claim these higher requirements

OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

for one day alone is a concession to weakness, I shall not quarrel with you. I shall say only that human nature, being constituted as it is, it is foolish to ignore the fact that human weakness always climbs into strength by just such means. The recognition of Lent by many Christian churches is another concession to the same weakness. The pendulum-like swing of human nature is a great fact, as true as any other rhythmic fact of natural law.

We must not stop here, however. We may say, in talking of Sunday, "I ought to do so and so, regardless of the religious requirement." In point of fact, however, one cannot be regardless of the religious requirement. The truth is, then, that the New Testament version of what ought to be done on Sunday is very different from the Old Testament version. To begin with, we should remember, both in our speech and our thought, that Sunday is not the Jewish Sabbath. A great many people talk about the "Sabbath" as if it were a more religious word than Sunday. I never like to hear the word "Sabbath" applied to the first day of the week: that word belongs to the Jewish people, and still indicates, and properly, what

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

we call Saturday. The first day of the week in our speech should be either "Sunday" or "the Lord's Day." Strictly speaking, Sunday commemorates, not the Jewish Sabbath, but the day on which Christ rose from the dead. The early Church, to be sure, transferred to Sunday a large number of the observances of the Jewish Sabbath. This was done for convenience, and also because many of these observances were built upon a sound philosophy of life. Having a just conception, however, of what the Church ought to require in regard to the keeping of Sunday, we must remember to add to the Old Testament commandments, Christ's practices on the Jewish Sabbath, and then to add to those two elements the recollection that the day is primarily to the Christian Church the commemoration of the Resurrection,— a weekly memorial of the great fact which Easter celebrates. Now Christ's example and his few words about the Sabbath, you will remember. Most notable among them, perhaps, is the saying: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." This goes to the root of the whole matter, and from it we come to the statement of the most fundamental thing we know about the ideal

OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

Sunday. Any plan for conduct on that day must be based on a habit of mind, and not on a code of action : it must be judged not by what we do, but by how we think and feel. The doing will be influenced — in fact often determined — by the thinking and feeling. But once let us get the right habit of mind, and there need be no more “musts” and “must nots” for us. The puzzling questions of casuistry will disappear.

In determining my own conduct for that day, I have found that, in order that the observance of Sunday should show results in character, at least four elements should enter into it. The first is undoubtedly physical rest. That was the idea of the day laid down in Genesis, and it is the idea which should govern the whole world to-day. We need not cheapen the value of rest or apologise for it. The human spirit needs rest for the body, and the conduct on Sunday which excludes rest can never become fruitful of good results. It is right that the hard-working clerk and the equally hard-working merchant should have an hour or two of additional sleep and a sense of freedom from toil on Sunday. To fill the day to the brim with religious duties is to misconceive its initial purpose.

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

We are bound to have some rest ourselves on Sunday, and we are still more bound to give it to any others whose lives we help to influence. There are at least two great classes of people who seem, by the demands of civilisation, to be cut off from the possibility of obtaining rest on Sunday. These are domestic servants and men employed by the great transportation companies. For each the day is often the hardest of the week. The vast crowds which patronise the trolley lines in our cities must be taken care of. In many and many a household the Sunday dinner is the most elaborate of the week, and usually there are many guests. It appears to me that you and I, and people like us, ought to address ourselves, at least so far as our own personal example and influence can extend toward lightening the labours of these people. I am never happy unless my servants have an easier day on Sunday than on other days, and a certain number of hours of absolute freedom in which they may take advantage of the change in the current of thought and action which is so essential to me. The question of the transportation companies is more difficult, and all that I can do in the matter is not to join the crowd

OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

which doubles the labour of the motorman and the car conductor on Sunday.

The second element which I would bring into every Sunday is that there should be some act corresponding ever so faintly to what Christ did when on that day he healed the man with the withered hand. To do something for somebody in need is of all human acts most gracious. The deed reflects upon the doer: it deepens and enriches the nature. To live for days without such an act means to grow harder and colder, less human. Of all the days in the week, Sunday should be the one full of compassion. Our Puritan forefathers recognised this when they used to say that works of necessity and mercy might be done on Sunday. We sometimes content ourselves with those of necessity alone, and so lose the finer touch.

The third element which I would put into my Sunday should be some period of solitude, to be spent in "just thinking." Out of all the busy whirl of life one hour should be caught somehow on Sunday which shall be given to reflection. The power of continuous reflection should be one of the marks of the educated woman. Without it, we are still children. We must not be con-

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

tent with single moments of insight which make motive and ideal clear, as in a lightning flash. If we are so content, our virtue, like our introspection, becomes spasmodic. To have the ability to hold steadily and to study closely the motives of our conduct is to possess a strong safeguard against the assaults of sudden temptation. Such ability is to be acquired only by practice, and no circumstance is so favourable for it as the outward peace of the Lord's Day.

Finally, my last element of Sunday conduct shall be worship. For myself, this shall always be in Church. I know many people claim to find God's own temple in the woods and fields; but I notice that people who do this seldom seem really to worship in that temple. The man who goes to worship on the links, armed with a bag of golf clubs, never especially impresses me with his sincerity. Just here I may say how I view the whole matter of Sunday golf. I am always pleading for the best for Sunday. Now, if the best of which any given man is capable is represented by a game, whether of skill or of chance, let him by all means play the game. Meanwhile we may be very sorry for the temperament

OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

that is so shallow. I can understand how a man of few resources, of no taste for books, of little love for nature, of small experience in friendship, can find himself on Sunday drawn to the pleasant excitement of driving a small white ball over a field, and can really believe that he is a much-abused man if he is not allowed to do so. But how a man who has the freedom of the whole world of art, nature, humanity, and who once hears the call of Sunday for the best there is in him, can choose to give the day to golf, is to me a mystery. He is like the child who, with the wonders of the Bay of Fundy spread before him, chooses to spend the day playing jack-stones on the beach. Personally, I find nothing so useful in solving the great problems of life as to lose myself in the crowd of men and women that are all trying to lift their hearts to God, whether in prayer or in music, or through instruction or in the great sacraments of the Church. The whole spiritual history of the world clusters about public worship. I am not ready to ignore it or to abandon it for gatherings of a less serious nature. The Church has many faults. It will continue to have them as long as it is made up of

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

human beings; but, in spite of them, it is the noblest organisation that the world has known, and has wrought the most beneficent results.

So into my Sunday is to go some rest, some act of beneficence, some reflection, some worship. Dignified by these, the day cannot be wanting in result. With these as the foundation, many practical questions which arise in regard to the life of the home and of society will settle themselves. Shall I talk about some of them with you? In the first place, then, what shall be done about throwing open the doors of the home for a large number of guests on Sunday? I think the day a day for friendship and for the strengthening of the family tie. It is not the day for mere acquaintance, for idle gossip, or for uneasy chatter. The men and women that are asked to cross my threshold on that day shall be of the best. My little circle shall be drawn a bit closer than on other days. Everything that is flippant shall be excluded. This does not mean, of course, that the day is to be gloomy or lonely. It is not to be so, but rich in the noblest of human relations. What shall we read on Sunday? First, the

OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

best of which we are capable; second, not the books which are concerned with our Monday morning task. For example, if I were to teach "Pilgrim's Progress" on Monday morning, I would not read it on Sunday afternoon; since my thoughts must inevitably be burdened with plans for Monday morning's class-room. I think the principle of change quite as important as that of selection.

What shall we eat on Sunday? Not perhaps the cold meat and frugal loaf of the Puritan, but surely not the elaborate and heavy dinner which marks the advent of Sunday in too many households. Good, simple food, much of which is of the sort that may be prepared the day before,—this should be the rule, I think, in Christian households. I like the practice well which makes it possible for the members of the family themselves to prepare a meal at least once on a Sunday, and so give the servants freedom.

Shall we have a different rule for Sunday for different classes of people? Surely. The best way of spending Sunday for the tired shop-girl that stands behind the counter all day long must be different from that of the young woman who has a ride every morning,

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

a drive every afternoon, and an abundance of fresh air and exercise the whole week through. The habit of mind, not the code of action, is to be our motto. A true philosophy of life does not ignore personal differences, but takes them into account completely and fundamentally.

Rightly used, Sunday ought to bring to us all a much-needed poise and calm, a clearer vision of the proportion of things. It should come to children and parents alike as literally the best day of the week. Its hours should be all too short for the good and pleasant works to be done in them. It should be as free from the stern repression of the Puritans as from the boisterousness and frivolity of the dwellers at Merrymount. It should select for itself the noblest experiences of the week and repeat them. In a large family the birthday of the mother is a red-letter day. On that anniversary nobody absorbs himself so that he forgets the mother. No book is exciting enough, no invitation attractive enough, to keep the children long away from her side. It is the culmination of the devotion of the year. It is a feast day,—the feast of love. Such an atmosphere one may hope to create in our homes on Sunday. It ought

ON LUXURY

to be made God's day in some such sense as that. There will be in it nothing hard or cold or iron-bound, but everything will be spontaneous, happy, peaceful; and by such a method we ought to get out of it all the best that there was in the old Puritan Sunday and everything that is good in the greater modern freedom.

THE PLACE OF LUXURY IN LIFE

MY DEAR MARGARET: I am delighted with all you write me of your beautiful new rooms, but I am straightway called upon to preach you a little sermon about them. It is not necessary for me to go very deeply into the discussion of the ethics of expenditure, for I know you are already thinking out your course of conduct in that matter. Much nonsense has been written and spoken about it. I once heard a woman boast at a public meeting that, with an income of fifteen thousand dollars, she never spent more than one hundred and fifty dollars a year on her clothes. I think that showed a lamentable lack of the sense of proportion. The shop-girl that spends all her wages on her

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

dress errs in a similar fashion, though in the opposite direction. If there were no other reason for the larger expenditure, the mere fact of the personal relations it would permit with the increased number of work-women would be a strong argument for the well-dressed woman. Relations with work-women based on so-called philanthropy must be in the nature of the case artificial. Relations based on actual service, asked, performed, and well paid, are reasonable and natural, and form the most solid foundations for sound and helpful friendship between those who serve and those who are served. Of course, this friendship cannot be established without effort. It is easy to be lazy and to throw away splendid chances to work at the various phases of the social question, because they do not come with any blare of trumpets. None the less the very opportunities which come thus unheralded are likely to be the best.

Every question of expenditure must be considered on its own merits, and with all the wisdom we can command. Money may be hoarded: that is bad. It may be wisely given away: that is good. It may be spent in ways which furnish healthful employ-

ON LUXURY

ment and profit to workers, and which bring them into natural contact with one another and with their employers. Surely, this is not the ignoble matter it is sometimes represented by would-be reformers, if only it is stimulated by a high intelligence and held in check by a quick sense of the fitness and proportion of things.

There is another aspect of the influence of judicious luxury upon character. We should make constant progress in the direction of appreciation of refinements,—art, books, comforts. Civilisation depends on these. You will remember King Lear's comprehensive answer to Regan's cruel question, why he should need even a single attendant : —

“ Oh, reason not the need ; our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's.”

There is a whole system of political economy in the four lines. It is as narrowing to a woman's true growth to find no pleasure in the beauty of art as it is to ignore the beauty of nature. Noble pictures, harmonious colouring, beautiful furniture, all make their ap-

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

peal to our higher qualities, not to our lower. Admiration of them is close followed by the desire to possess them; and not to gratify this natural and legitimate desire, within judicious limits, argues a certain stinginess of soul.

But appreciation is one thing: slavery is another. All these beautiful things, and the method of a well-ordered life, even, must be held lightly, to be dropped in an instant at the call of duty. So only is true happiness and the standard of perfect womanhood to be attained. To be incapable of a noble sacrifice because one has slept soft and eaten daintily is a sign of moral degeneracy. The little child is a complete slave to things, and is absolutely dependent upon older people. Gradually he emancipates himself from this slavery and dependence: the cradle gives place to the bed; and, as the boy grows up, he may abandon his luxurious couch for a pile of pine boughs in the forest, and find the change acceptable. He begins to like hardship; he begins to despise anything like a fetter which binds him to luxury. This is healthful and natural, and more and more the girl is coming to share this experience with her brother; but our modern life has a tendency to re-enslave the youth, and at the age

of twenty he may be more dependent than he was at ten. Luxury does its weakening work when it is let alone. But it is our business to find and use the natural correctives for this ill effect. Scientific ventilation is the necessary corrective for the habit of living in houses instead of in the free air. Well-directed exercise in a gymnasium is the corrective for a sedentary occupation. So, everywhere in civilisation, we shall find, if we care to seek them, ways of minimising the evil attached to more complicated conditions of living.

I believe that the dangers of luxury can be conquered if we will set luxury where it really belongs in our scheme of living. I like the quaint New England phrase "to do without." You and I must learn to be able at a minute's notice "to do without." It is not less important than learning "to do with." Luxury is only one of the things which we may well do without, when occasion demands. Furniture and food and what we call "comfort" are symbolic. I should be ashamed not to be able to eat plainly and sleep hard. I should be ashamed also not to be able to do without a sympathetic listener for my woes. Every woman must at least be able to

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

bear her own burden. I think a woman may well learn happily to do without the constant assurances of love which she is likely to crave. I am sure we modern folk ought to be able to get on with less constant excitement. Amusement should take simpler forms, and it does not do us any harm when occasionally we get a week or a month with no amusement at all. In other words, and finally, to make a long story short, no form of luxury, physical, intellectual, or moral, ought to be essential to us. We may take it and delight in it and be grateful for it, or we may drop it and forget it, and live soundly and healthfully in either condition. Enjoy your new furnishings and your luxury all you will, but remember that they are outside of you,—not a part of you,—and that, with them or without them, you are bound to be yourself.

A BACCALAUREATE SERMON

MY DEAR MARGARET: I have been reading the abstracts of the Baccalaureate sermons of this year. It is interesting to see how most of them sound the same note. It is one of

A BACCALAUREATE SERMON

warning, of perplexity, sometimes of despair with modern conditions. The college presidents, apparently, are even more oppressed than other men by the contradictions of our time. There are undoubtedly many such contradictions. For example, never was the talk of peace and the aspiration for universal peace so loudly spoken; and yet the two most civilised nations of the world are waging wars which many of their critics think horribly unjustifiable, and the Czar, who called the Peace Conference at The Hague, is arming his subjects, preparatory, if one may draw the obvious inference, to the conquest of a great territory outside his own domain. Again, no year in the history of the world has seen such magnificent gifts to philanthropy and education. We count millions now where we used to count thousands for such purposes. Yet in this very year there have been combinations of capital the like of which the world has never dreamed of, and which many shrewd observers believe threaten the welfare of the workingman, and thereby prophesy a dominance of the rich, disastrous to human rights. We boast ourselves of our free public education, and the universal spread of intelligence, and the decay of illiteracy;

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

and yet the school board in this most conservative New England city is accused of a corruption which would disgrace a ward politician, and politics seems to be the dominant note in the management of our public schools. Our last quarter of the century has seen every doorthrown open for the education of women, and we have been promised that that education should fit women for the life of their time, and should free them from the frivolity and flippancy which have been their reproach; and yet, in our own day, extravagance and luxury in women's lives have reached an unprecedented point, and some critics will have us believe that the ethical standards of women have fallen, by reason of this luxury, far below those even of their husbands and brothers. Never has there been so clear a presentation of the ideals which ought to obtain in our own lives, and never, I venture to say, has the hand-to-hand struggle with savage temptation been exceeded or even equalled. So much for the statement of the dark side, as it appears to me.

The "opposition," as we may call it, is bitter in speech, but poor in deed. It looks a little as if it had lost step with the march of affairs. Good folk have begun to scold,

A BACCALAUREATE SERMON

and they do nothing else. Now scolding attracts nobody but cranks, and accomplishes nothing. On one side and on another it looks, to quote Mr. Roosevelt's clever phrase, "as if the best were the sworn enemy of the good." The great peace party forgets that war is sometimes better than peace; the philanthropist forgets that combinations of capital mean not only cheap wages, but cheap products; the friend of public education tries to make us believe that giving the suffrage to women would abolish politics from the dominance they now have over the public schools. New laws against gambling are proposed, as if they could take the place of principles against gambling. Everywhere the critic has become destructive, and not constructive. In our own personal struggles, it looks as if we were willing to admire and praise virtue, and leave it for others to practise. What is to be done?

The remedies, as I see them, lie largely with educated women. The first one is an old one, and not especially picturesque. We need to stop talking, and go each to her own work, to her daily round of duties, more or less ordinary, but some of which, at least,

ABOUT PERSONAL CONDUCT

shall be concerned with the public welfare. In the second place, we need to try to see human nature as it is, and not as we think it should be. For example, there is a universal desire to possess things. It exists in varying degrees, of course, in different classes of society; but it exists everywhere. We try to instill it into the mind of the poor man. "Let us teach him the pleasure of thrift," we say, "and he will be thrifty. Let him get a hundred dollars in the bank, and he will have tasted the pleasure of saving and try to make it two hundred." We recognise this power as a perfectly legitimate one, and one which may be used as a regnant motive. Now, if we recognise it in the poor man, are we not bound to do the same in the man whom we call "rich"? When a man has a hundred thousand dollars, does he not wish to make it two hundred thousand, five hundred thousand? Who shall say when he has enough? Who shall revile him that he does not tear the passion out of his breast when he has cultivated it in the early years of his business with so much pains and care? When is a millionaire to become "unthrifty" as a virtue? What is the use of ignoring a

A BACCALAUREATE SERMON

fundamental fact of human nature when we are dealing, for example, with the question of the formation of great trusts ?

Our remedy for the accumulation of great fortunes and its attendant evils lies not in laws or in strikes or in anarchy, but in the wider diffusion of the generous spirit which finds its keenest pleasure in sharing benefits, and which desires neither vulgar display nor financial power, but the greatest good of the greatest number.

In the third place, I think we ought to make a special effort in this day to call black black and white white, in our own character and in our own struggles. It is not so important that we should label correctly the deeds and thoughts of others ; but, if our own moral standards are to be kept high, we must be sure not to deceive ourselves. I am wickedly led to wonder if some of the men who are so ardent in their advocacy of universal peace are entirely free from self-seeking. Some women who aspire to be social reformers have a clear idea that a social reformer is a pretty conspicuous person in the public eye. In short, the motives of many of us are more inextricably mixed than human motives ought to be.